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SPECULATIVE TRUTH

The EARL OF HALSBURY

IN delivering this lecture I am to speak on some aspect of truth. The practice of examining the various contexts in which a word may be used, in order to disclose what its usages have in common as a clue to its meaning, is of respectable antiquity. If I indulge this practice I find an "embarras de richesse" in modern philosophical literature under two headings, the truth of analytic propositions and the truth of synthetic propositions: the first deals with criteria of consistency and the second with criteria of verifiability.

In talking of speculative truth I feel that my subject has something in common with both sets of criteria inasmuch as a speculative system, to be acceptable, must be internally consistent on the one hand and not repugnant to experience on the other. I am well aware that there is a school of philosophy which holds that metaphysical speculations are nonsense inasmuch as analytic and synthetic truth between them comprise all that can be said significantly. I have never been able to accept this view myself because of the arbitrary catalogue that its exponents seem willing to make respecting the experiences which may be considered for purposes of verification.

It seems to me, on the contrary, that when we have made a list of all the true propositions of logic and mathematics known to us on the one hand, and all the true propositions about nature and experience known to us on the other, there remain a number of questions which can be significantly asked, the truth, falsity or nonsensicality of which cannot be established without careful examination.

From the list of possible answers we may strike out whatever is ostensibly repugnant to experience. I do not mean that we must accept experience as infallible, but that if we wish to join issue with generally accepted truths—the supposed laws of nature for instance—

we must propose fair alternatives. If we are not prepared to do so, then we cannot entertain propositions which conflict with them.

The residue includes but does not comprise what we are free to believe. A system of belief must be internally consistent, and not all propositions of the residue including what we are free to believe will be mutually consistent. Any extract of the residue which meets this criterion is a speculative system and each of us tends to assemble such a system on reflection. I can say of my own system, therefore, that it appears consistent with logic and experience, does not appear to contradict itself, and satisfies me more than any other I have come across.

In this sense I am a dualist. I do not believe that matter is a dream in the mind of a dreamer. I equally do not believe that when I sit on a pin something non-existent fancies that it dislikes what it alleges that it feels but actually doesn't. On the contrary, I believe that galaxies, stars, planets and living creatures existed before I was born, continue to exist when I am not looking at them, and will continue to exist after I am dead. I also believe that when I will to do something, my will issues in action which would not otherwise occur.

In asserting this belief I invite attack and am prepared to defend. It involves so many matters, however, that I cannot deal with all of them in the course of one lecture. I will, however, try to explain how I reconcile in my own mind the system of causality which I believe to hold in the realm of matter and the freedom of will which I assert that I exercise when I determine upon some action. If I write more as a scientist than as a philosopher of one of the metaphysical schools, it is because I have formed my views largely by reflection upon the beliefs which I exploit when I am earning my living as a scientist. Let me therefore begin by stating that I have always been dissatisfied with the semantic aspects of the way in which our ideas of determinism and causality are commonly expressed.

The Semantics of Determinism

What follows should be thought of as Chapter IV of an imaginary treatise on the subject of Determinism. Chapter I would introduce the aetiology of causal ideas in the growing mind of a child. Chapter II would compare the ideas of primitive peoples on the same subject. Chapter III would be a psychoanalytic study of the facts described in Chapters I and II. It would deal with the emotional strength associated with particular intellectual solutions of certain classes of problems. The first three chapters would form an introduction to the rest of the book and would be designed to expose, if possible, those concealed prejudices to which we appeal in the name of knowledge held *a priori*. The way would then be free to consider definitions, which would be as follows:

1. *Determinism.* I suggest that this term should be reserved for the thesis that the Universe, regarded as all there is, has a relation-structure which enables it to be rationally studied. I do not claim that we have this knowledge *a priori* though I have found it difficult to construct anything but a very simple model of a chaos without any relation-structure at all. Determinism as here defined presupposes no one particular relation-structure rather than any other. Alternative Determinisms will become apparent in the sequel. It will be convenient to dichotomize all such alternatives into two classes, however:

(*a*) *Time-Independent Determinism.* Under this heading we may refer to all geometrical and spatial relationships, stress distributions, potential fields, etc., where we can obtain knowledge about the whole from knowledge about a part. Thus, from a knowledge of the length of a girder and the load at one point, we can obtain knowledge as to the stress at each point along its length. I suggest that some word such as "computability" be reserved for this situation.

(*b*) *Time-Dependent Determinism.* Under this heading we may refer to all relationships involving Time explicitly. I suggest that *Causality* be restricted in meaning to cover such relationships but that it be otherwise free to take all its usual meanings:

(1) A state of the world spread over one time range has a relationship to a state of the world spread over some other time range as in, e.g., "The Colonial ambitions of the Great Powers were a cause of the First World War."

(2) As in (1) but allowing the time ranges to contract to points in time as in, e.g., "The electromagnetic potentials at time t_2, can be evaluated from Maxwell's equations and their state at time t_1."

(3) As in (2) but allowing the world to condense to a point as in, e.g., "The event at (P_1t_1) had a relationship to the event at (P_2t_2).

2. *Uniqueness.* Relationships in logic can be classified as One : One, One : Many, Many : One, Many : Many, and so on. Determinism asserts relationship only. It does not assert unique relationship unless we make it do so. In a philosophical approach there seem to be disadvantages in making it do so implicitly rather than explicitly. Determinism is one matter, uniqueness is another. Mathematics is full of non-unique relationships. The sum of 3 and 5 is 8, uniquely. But 8 is not uniquely derived by summing 3 and 5; for 0 and 8, 1 and 7, 2 and 6, etc., would in addition all yield 8 as their sum. In the material world the same considerations apply. Components may yield a unique mixture but a mixture cannot necessarily be resolved into unique antecedents.

3. *Symmetry.* A relationship is said to be symmetrical if when A has the relation R to B, then B has the relation R to A. I use the word

Symmetry here in rather a different sense according as to how we view the passage of time. I suggest that we need two explicit terms in this context:

(*a*) *Explicability*, reserved for causal relationships discernible in time past,

(*b*) *Predictability*, reserved for causal relationships projected into the future.

These terms are not synonymous. A billiard cue balanced on the tip of the finger can be used to illustrate a system that has the first quality but not the second. Statically the system is unstable. Dynamically it can be stabilized by appropriate feedback. The motion in time past can always be explained in strictly causal terms. The motion in time to come cannot, however, be successfully predicted because the operator's finger continually injects random motion into the system.

The Classical Idea of Causality

In terms of the foregoing definitions, it will be seen that eighteenth-century ideas of physical causality attributed uniqueness and symmetry to causal relationships and treated explicability and predictability as synonymous. The phenomena involved in eighteenth-century explanations were mostly astronomical and *no* violation of common sense appeared to be involved by accepting them. What was given explicit form as an intellectual adventure in the eighteenth century hardened into a dogma in the nineteenth, a dogma from which it appears extremely difficult to shake ourselves free. This difficulty conceals a source of abundant confusion, moreover, because the component postulates of eighteenth-century determinism never received explicit form and our minds have been conditioned to accept the identification of explicability with predictability as inherent in the acceptance of causality itself. Thus to separate explicability from predictability appears to threaten the entire causal concept and to destroy the rational basis on which science depends. It is difficult to free oneself from this form in which the concept of causality hardened. For Aristotle an appropriate motion was inherent in the quality of things. Dante shared this feeling when he wrote of "l'amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle," and William Blake expressed it passionately with his " . . . may God us keep from single vision and Newton's sleep." Engels may seem a queer companion to place beside Aristotle, Dante and Blake, but his "motion is the mode of existence of matter" seems to express the same idea. To this pattern of thought belongs the Quantum Theory whose exponents feel under no psychological or logical compulsion to add an explanatory mechanism to an otherwise adequate description of observable phenomena. By contrast, Newton's Law that action and reaction are equal and opposite

has bitten deep into our minds. An object can only fly if it has wings to flap, or walk if it has legs to articulate. If it accelerates it must be pushed by a rod or pulled by a string. Empty space thus acquired for Lord Kelvin the effective properties of an incompressible elastic solid in sharp contrast to the modern picture offered by the Quantum Field theorists who treat it more as if it consisted of champagne fizzing with bubbles called "virtual particles," born only to disappear. Before dealing in greater detail with modern ideas of physical causality I must break off, however, to discuss its relevance in the psychological field.

The Idea of Free-Will

The classical difficulties associated with the concept of free-will seem to be due to the confusion of explicability with predictability that I have referred to above. We never hesitate, however fervently we believe in free-will, to explain the actions of our neighbours in terms of their motives. We are equally positive about our own actions, and ready to explain how we did in fact choose. We are undisturbed, too, by the belief that a choice to be made now will be seen in retrospect to have had an explanation. What we feel is that in the moment of choice, the choice will be free in the sense that it could be otherwise, that a repeat performance could issue differently, that a duplicate choice by an otherwise identical third party could show a contrast. Thus, while we can always account for how we have acted we cannot account for how we are going to act. The situation may not be new. The consequences of similar actions on previous occasions may determine the course of a repetition. Such memories may be entirely private or may not even be open to retrospection. Every choice may need to be thought of as unique and the idea of repetitive situations may be impermissible. There may be fundamental uncertainties in specification. The existence of the problem requiring choice may be a component *part* of the problem, leading to an infinite regress of problems within problems requiring solution. Given a choice to be made requiring the solution of a problem, it may be transformed into a second to be solved in terms of criteria irrelevant to the first, and the solution of the first then made to depend upon that of the second. Thus Buridan's donkey, paralysed in a position of unstable equilibrium between two equally attractive trusses of hay, can abandon the attempt to control his tropisms and exploit them instead. He may recognize that he will starve unless he introduces an element of asymmetry into the situation. Instead of concentrating on hay he can direct his attention to asymmetry. Instead of deciding between the merits of left-hand or right-hand trusses, he can decide between sneezing, turning a somersault or waiting for Brownian motion to

come to his assistance. A solution of this second problem will infallibly procure a solution of the first.

Our attitude to free-will appears to be based upon this sort of consideration. Moral choices are felt to be moral in a sense that reflex actions are not, just because they are worked over in the foregoing sort of way. They do not cease to be moral in our eyes because an account can subsequently be given of how the choice was made. Nevertheless I feel that much of the foregoing, however correct in fact, is an evasion of the issue in theory. We feel that anything explicable must be predictable, and the above arguments are restless and uneasy attempts to explain why something that ought to be predictable isn't—uneasy, because we feel that anything unpredictable will turn out to have been inexplicable; so that a belief in free-will appears incompatible with a rational approach to the explanation of anything.

These difficulties disappear in their entirety if we suppose that explicability and predictability are not logical concomitants of one another and that no explanation of their divorce in the sphere of choice is called for. They are not divorced in any context for they were never married.

I will now turn back to Physics in order to show that the same prejudice is responsible for many conceptual difficulties that have arisen in recent years.

Quantum Physics

The difficulties of this subject are diminished, I believe, if explicit attention is diverted at the outset towards two semantic difficulties that have plagued it from the beginning.

1. *Observables and Inferables.* Quantum Theory is alleged to confine itself to treatment of observables and to regard unobservables as non-existent. This pseudo-Berkeleian standpoint is of course nonsense. Quantum Theory is concerned with no such restriction at all. It is concerned with *inferables*. Conditions at the centre of the earth or the sun are in every sense of the word unobservable, but we can make inferences about them with reasonable certainty and nobody supposes that they do not exist. The situation in regard to *uninferables* is altogether different and merits analysis. Why is mathematical physics possible? Why can we translate a synthetic into an analytic proposition with a dictionary, transform the analytic proposition into another by logical and mathematical manipulation, translate the result back into synthetic terms and emerge with a truth about nature? I believe that no subtlety is required to answer the question and that it is a matter of mere ingenuity in setting up the dictionary and in choosing the particular formal calculus to be used for the job.

If the postulates of the calculus correspond to true generalizations about nature and its class and relation structure are true of nature, the analytic/synthetic dictionary is a straightforward 1 : 1 correspondence. We can never, of course, rely on our original ingenuity having been adequate. The formal calculus may include implicit postulates which are not true of nature and these will cause trouble sooner or later. When they do so a revolution is said to occur in theoretical physics; this is usually regarded as the establishment of a new truth. In fact it is more likely to consist in the removal of an old fallacy.

On this view of the matter it is clear that any such scheme will break down if the formal calculus used implies that it is possible to make inferences in any context where no inference can be made. This was the situation which led to the setting up of the new Quantum Theory in 1925. The old formal apparatus for dealing with the interaction between matter and radiation at the atomic level contained precisely such a hidden postulate permitting inference upon uninferables. Its removal led to some rather unfamiliar mathematics which, however, got the answers right where the old familiar mathematics got them wrong.

2. *The Uncertainty/Indeterminacy Principle.* It is again unfortunate for the layman that one principle goes by two titles which are not strictly synonymous. Indeterminacy vaguely suggests that the reign of causality is over. Uncertainty suggests equally vaguely that our knowledge of nature is in some way imprecise. The principle in its current form implies neither of these rather vague generalities. What it states is that one class of experiment, or observation or interaction, interferes with another class according to a very precise rule in such a way that *simultaneous* inferences from each are subject to a limitation whereby an increase of certainty in one has to be paid for by a decrease of certainty in the other. The effect of this principle when applied in practice is that all those inferences which can be put to any useful purpose can be made simultaneously with as much certainty as we please.

Having disposed of these two obstacles to understanding I will try to deal with an aspect of Quantum Theory which is conceptually difficult to many, namely that explicability and predictability enter into the theory on different terms. A past event is always explained in terms of rigorous causality. A given spectral line, for example, has always the same wavelength and is always interpreted as due to an atomic transition from one state precisely defined to some other state just as precisely defined. There is no uncertainty whatever that the atoms responsible for emitting the light which produced a line in a spectroscope quite definitely started in the first state and as definitely ended in the second. It is otherwise with the present and the future. Any attempt to predict the future is partially inhibited by a

fundamental ambiguity involved in defining the present. If the future presents alternatives, we can only assign their relative probabilities of occurrence. The reason for the ambiguity in defining the present is simply that to infer its nature we must observe an interaction—an *inter*action, please note. That is to say the system whose present state we seek to define must act on something which will act on it and transform it into something else. The inference, when at last we make it, refers to the past. Just as the horizon is the line we can never reach and to-morrow is the day that never comes, so the present is the state we can never define. It is the future of an inference we made in the past, and can only be defined as a distribution of probabilities over all the possible accounts that can be given of it.

Now these are facts about nature. I do not see why we should not accept them as facts and be done with it. They are only indigestible if we insist on supposing that explicability and predictability are concomitants of one another and that without *both*, causality and rationality must collapse in ruins. I prefer not to make this supposition.

Noisy and Turbulent Physics

In communications engineering "noise" is the component of transmission or reception which contains no information. It is ultimately due to incompleteness of specification at some level in the system of transmission and reception. This incompleteness occurs at two levels. The first is the Quantum Theory level I have referred to above. The second is the level at which we neglect residual interactions with the rest of the Universe regarded as excluded from the specification. In the case of telephone communication, noise is the cumulative effect of

(*a*) cross talk from other subscribers.
(*b*) crackling due to atmospherics.
(*c*) crackling due to movement of grains in the microphone.
(*d*) thermal noise due to the resistors in the amplifiers not being at the absolute zero.
(*e*) electron "shot" noise due to quantum effects.

I would draw particular attention to item (*d*) above. There is no law of nature which states that the Universe is at the absolute zero. The greater part of it is in fact at a high temperature. We all jostle our neighbours as a result. This is known as Brownian movement. Thus there is in any system not at the absolute zero a minimum noise level. We live in a noisy Universe in fact, although the Music of the Spheres is thought to be discernible above the background! Noisy systems are similar to the billiard cue balanced upon one finger. Their behaviour is explicable but not predictable. In fact the random motion of the

operator's finger to which I referred earlier is an example of noise though not of minimum noise. The correlation coefficient between motion predicted and motion observed is a function of time tending to zero as time progresses.

The universe is not only noisy, it is turbulent. It would be interesting to know if Laplace's perfect calculator could make anything of turbulent systems. Human mathematics have so far been somewhat unsuccessful and are currently satisfied to try to calculate correlation coefficients between velocities at different points in a turbulent medium. Noise and turbulence entail a progressive secular increase in the error in the verification of a prediction. A drop of water falling one inch to one side or the other of a watershed may end in either of two oceans separated by a continent.

If we accept these assertions as typical of the world in which we live, then the theoretical astronomy of the eighteenth century appears to have been an intellectual adventure into low noise-level, unquantized macroscopic phenomena of an uncharacteristic and rather exceptional kind. Insofar as our ideas of causality have crystallized out from the state of mind which this adventure engendered, I believe them to be in error by an overemphasis on predictability as a concomitant of explicability.

Functions of the Brain

If we restrict ourselves to causality as we know it in distinction to causality as our prejudices dispose us to preconceive it, we find that explicability and predictability require different treatments and cannot be regarded as concomitants of one another. This conclusion seems to emerge whether we consider causality in material systems or causality in mental systems characterized by free-will. The characteristic "noise" of material systems occurs at two levels, a superficial level where specifications are adventitiously incomplete and a deep or Quantum-level at which specification is intrinsically incomplete. I would suggest that the brain has to be regarded from two points of view. From one point of view it is a system which combines the complexity possible to a macroscopic system with the deep-level unpredictability of a quantive system.

From the second point of view it is a coupling device enabling the causality characteristics of mind to operate in conformity with the causality characteristics of matter.

Reverting to the first point of view, the brain is a complex organism where there must be many equivalent or canonical structures, as they are called, overlapping energy levels and highly conjugated organic molecules capable of conveying electronic displacements to a distance and permitting correlation between events at different sites. The so-called resonances and their corresponding correlations to which this

state of affairs would lend itself are beyond our present power to describe. It is probably better to think of it, not as any sort of a machine, but as a single gigantic highly complex organic molecule exhibiting explicability but not predictability in every mode of behaviour.

Dealing with the second point of view, it seems essential to scrutinize the ancillary hypothesis to which it commits one. The physiologist would insist that the events in our minds are the results of chemical reactions in the brain (another name for quantum interactions). The dualist has to postulate that events in the brain must depend upon the activities of any kind of free-thinking and willing mind coupled to it. Thus mind and brain interact reciprocally in the dualist view. Now all the transformations in nature are *inter*-actions. The dualist may postulate, though he cannot describe, the action of mind on brain. If his postulate is denied, then his opponent must either deny the reality of mind at all or assert a one-way non-reciprocal action of brain on mind of an apparently exceptional character. Thus while the consequences of the dualist's postulate cannot be described in detail, its nature is not unreasonable and is consistent with all else that we know of natural transformations that proceed by *inter*-action.

Bertrand Russell in a characteristically lucid discussion of the problem has suggested that a mind and a brain event are not different events but the same event. I do not think his view is significantly different from that which I am putting forward. If we regard mind and brain as two cogwheels in mesh, then the question of which is driving the other depends upon where the load is applied. The following analogy, however, appeals to me in illustration of the point.

In experimental chemistry, it is often necessary to conduct delicate and complicated manipulations on material completely isolated from the experimental environment. The need for this occurs when either the environment, e.g., moisture-laden air, would interfere with the experiment or the materials under investigation, e.g., radioactive poisons, would be dangerous to the experimenter. A device known for historical reasons as a dry-box is then used as follows. A hermetically sealed glass-panelled box has two holes cut into one side, and the sleeves of two rubber gloves are hermetically sealed round the openings so made. The experimenter's hands are thus free to conduct what manipulations he wishes inside the box, though they remain topologically speaking outside it and cannot actually come into contact with its contents because of the rubber gloves by which they are encased. In terms of this analogy the inside of the box is the material universe, the rubber glove is the brain, and the experimenter's hand represents mind. Glove and hand are so designed that each perforce follows the movements of the other. In Bertrand

Russell's sense, a glove movement and a hand movement are the same movement. If now the glove were sprayed with some quick-setting glue so that it stiffened and became immobile, the hand, so long as it remained inside the glove, would also be forced to stiffen into immobility. This provides an analogy with unconsciousness accompanying anaesthesia or sleep. Death would be represented by a withdrawal of the hand from the glove. It would be an entirely different type of events to total anaesthesia or complete sleep. This is only an analogy, of course, but I find it an illuminating one.

Noise and Moral Responsibility

Noise arises, as I have said, from incomplete specification. Consider an intelligence officer "tapping" a telephone line subject to cross-talk. I will suppose that two conversations are going on simultaneously. One of them will be "signal" and contain information of importance to him. The other will be "noise" and contain no information. There is, however, no difference in *kind* between the two conversations. The issue of which is "signal" and which is noise turns upon the specification of what interests him. If the specification were changed, noise could become signal and signal would become noise. Now I believe that the brain is very noisy in this sense and that a multiplicity of potentially significant signals are always circulating through it. The World originates some of them, the Flesh originates others, and the Devil for all I know may have a hand in any remainder not accounted for by the World and the Flesh. The mind responds to stimulation by this noise generated in the brain, but according to the doctrine of moral responsibility as practised in the Law Courts can generate its own information for purposes of comparison and discrimination and treat somatic stimuli as noise for the purpose of deciding upon action. An individual is judged blameworthy if he fails to do this through negligence, but insane if a reprehensible action is due to a fault in the circuit. These assessments are made pragmatically. He is insane if the disability manifests itself in every context. He is negligent if his conduct is aberrant by his own standards of behaviour in other contexts or by his neighbour's conduct in the context of the situation under review. This is how we judge others: as far as introspection permits it appears to be how we judge ourselves so that rough justice is done. Whether this is "just" is another matter.

Speculative Truth

Much as I should like to deal with the epistemological problem involved in the dualist position I must break off at this point to return

to the main subject of my lecture which is about speculative truth. I have considered but one topic involved in defending one speculative system, the topic of causality in relation to the dualist position and such contributions as my reflection upon modern developments in physics enable me to make to thought upon that topic.

If such is my belief you are entitled as philosophers to subject me to cross-examination. Why do I believe what I believe, and how can it be known?

As to how it can be known, it can *not* be known with certainty in my view or I would not regard it as speculative. It cannot, that is to say, be deduced mathematically or be known with certainty in terms of any criteria of verifiability yet available. An opponent might disprove it by a demonstration of internal inconsistency, but an exponent could not verify it by external criteria at present. I do not believe it to be nonsense, however. I can, in principle, imagine phenomena in the field of Spiritualism or Telepathy which could render it as credible as any other scientific theory which we claim to verify. Whether any such theory can be verified at all in the metaphysical sense is another issue.

Why then do I believe it, and what do I mean by "believe?" We all, I think, attempt to synthesize and integrate our experience into a homogeneous picture. The point at which we feel that we have reached finality is to some extent a matter of temperament. Less would not satisfy us, more would not be credible. Monism may be tenable in heaven, but I cannot express it on earth in any verbal formula which appears to make sense. On earth, I am therefore content to be a dualist. I have spoken much of causality and I want in conclusion to lay bare at least one pitfall. I spoke earlier of an imaginary Chapter I in a treatise on the subject, a chapter devoted to the aetiology of causal ideas in the mind of a growing child.

Now I once knew two men of widely dissimilar temperaments and substantially similar intellectual interests. They were close friends and neighbours. Each was a mathematician, each had a solid grounding in physics. Yet one evolved into an Engineer and the other into a Physicist who made Quantum Theory his speciality. Their ideas on causality were widely divergent and I knew them well enough to guess at their genesis. The engineer was brought up in a well-ordered and well-regulated household under the kindly discipline of an equably-tempered father, a pillar of the Church, a rock upon whom his family built their household arrangements. The Engineer's attitude to his father was one of devotion, his main concern being to disguise, in the old gentleman's later years, the upsetting fact that his son was an earnest Atheist who had displaced God from His throne and substituted Newton's Laws of Motion for the Ten Commandments. His attitude to causality was as devotional as his

attitude to his father, and his conception thereof as well regulated as the habits he had learned in his childhood's well-managed nursery.

The household in which the Quantum Physicist was brought up did not resemble the other in the slightest. The father was an unpredictable sort of person, genial and amusing if sober, but tending to a certain moroseness in drink. The postman's delivery was as likely to bring a cheque from a publisher as a dun from a tradesman. His children were fond of him without having any illusions about his limitations and grew up with a cheerful inconsequential attitude to fate. They never quite knew what would happen next, but it didn't matter.

Of my two examples, the first, the Engineer, though mathematically competent to study the Quantum Theory, never did so and usually managed to avoid discussing it. His friend, the Physicist, revelled in Quantum Theory but could not interest himself in calculating the stresses in braced structures. When they discussed mathematics they accordingly compromised on the Theory of Numbers which was probably very good for them.

May it be that our attitude to God's Universe in part derives from what we learned of our parents' household? From all that speculation leaves open, from all that we feel free to believe, do we finally do no more than select that which, like an old and familiar suit of tweeds, can be comfortably worn?

Against Aristotle, Dante, Blake and Engels with his "motion is the mode of existence of matter" we have to set Newton with his passionate disbelief in action at a distance and Einstein with his implacable hostility to a "dice-playing God." If no reconciliation is possible between systems propounded by those who start from different visions of the world, what purpose can speculation serve? To this I have no answer unless it be Bradley's:—

> "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe by instinct, but to find these reasons is no less an instinct."

National Research Development Corporation.

PROFESSOR AYER'S "THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE"

P. F. STRAWSON

PROFESSOR AYER'S new book[1] is of very great interest. All the discussion is skilful, much of it is ingenious; the arguments ramify, but never get out of control; the prose is pleasant, the presentation polished and civilized. Once before, Professor Ayer investigated the foundations of empirical knowledge; and the central topics of his new book are, to a large extent, the same as those of his earlier one. These are topics which have been much discussed since 1940. Ayer takes account of many of these discussions, and his views, in consequence, have changed. They have not changed quite so radically as one might have expected. Ayer thinks that the old-style sceptic ought still to be given a run on the old course against the old competitors. If I am not mistaken, it is important to keep this guiding thought in mind in trying to understand his book. For it is easy to glide comfortably over the smooth surface of this prose without noticing transitions and modulations which, in a less expertly composed treatise, might have given one a jolt.

Knowledge and Scepticism. The first two chapters, I think, should be considered together. The question discussed in the first is, what it means to say of somebody that he knows that something is the case; and the nature of philosophical scepticism is explained in terms of the answer to this question. That answer seems, at first, fairly orthodox: the standard case in which x is correctly said to know that p is the case in which (1) p; (2) x is sure (has no doubt) that p; (3) x has the right to be sure that p. Let us waive, for the moment, any doubts about the phrase, "the right to be sure," and inquire, instead, when one has this right, what this right consists in. One has it if the situation is such that one's claim to know *meets certain standards* (29). At least in some cases, one's claim to know, or one's conviction, meets these standards only if it has a certain *backing* (30). One way of discovering *what* backing a claim or conviction in fact has—if it has one—is to ask the question, *How do you know?* (29). "To give an answer [to this question] is to put forward some other statement which *supports* the statement of which knowledge is claimed; *it is implied that this second statement is itself known to be true*" (74).[2]

It might now look as if we were on too steep a slope to too total a scepticism; for presumably the implied claim, if it is to be admitted,

[1] Macmillan, 1956, pp. 258, price 18s. Also in the Pelican Series, 3s. 6d.

[2] My italics here and in all quotations. Figures in parentheses are page references.

has also to meet the necessary standards, while, if not admitted, it does not supply the necessary support. But what about *its* backing? And so on. Surely it must *sometimes* be all right to say that somebody knows something. Fortunately things are not as bad as they begin to seem. The next few sentences after the one just quoted run:

> Again it may be asked how this is known, and then a third assertion may be made which supports the second. And so the process may continue until we reach a statement which we are willing to accept without a further reason. Not that it is theoretically impossible that a further reason should be found. It is just that at a certain point we decide that no further reason is required.

Now what makes this decision all right? Is it that there is a class of statements which, because of the *kind* of statements they are, do not, after all, have or need *any* backing (i.e. any supporting pieces of knowledge)? Or is it rather, as the quoted passage suggests, that it's sometimes all right to assume, or take it for granted, that a claim has whatever backing it may need?

If we say the second thing, we must mean it. And we must ask from what classes those statements (claims, convictions) may be drawn about which it is all right to make this assumption. If we make our guide here what we in fact do, what even the most cautious of us do in fact, the outlook for the sceptic is poor indeed. For it is hard to mention any one of those general classes of statements which are the targets of his scepticism, from which statements cannot be drawn which pass *this* test. Of course, to say that a statement which passes this test belongs to a certain class is not to say that all statements which belong to that class pass the test. But this is no consolation to the philosophical sceptic; for nothing less than the whole class can be his target.

To give the sceptic a run, then, one must not say this. Or not at first. One must at least begin by questioning our right to assume that "no further reason is required" in practically all the cases in which we ordinarily make this assumption. But one must not question it in *every* case. Otherwise the sceptic will have nowhere to start the run from. So one had better be ready with a special class of claims (convictions) which are not among the sceptic's targets, and do not need (or in a way do not need) any supporting bits of knowledge. Professor Ayer is ready with them: sense-statements, statements of immediate experience. Not quite what they were; no longer incorrigible; but at least such that it scarcely makes sense to ask the maker of them how *he* knows they are true. For

> what better answer could he give than that these just were the experiences that he was having? This is not to say that there can not be independent evidence for the truth of such statements. Without it people other than the speaker would have no reason for accepting them, neither would he himself at

other times. In certain cases, as we have seen, he may even use it to check the accuracy of his description of some present experience. But so long as he is actually having the experience in question, the independent evidence that there may be for its existence plays for him a subordinate role. His claim to know what the experience is, though it is subject to correction, is not considered to be in need of any external support (73–4).

Now to consider Ayer's own description of the sceptic. The sceptic is not, says Ayer, disagreeing with us about the *meaning* of the word "know"; only about its *application* (33). He attacks the adequacy of *accepted canons of evidence, standards of proof, types of inference* (33, 35, 36). "When, as is commonly the case, a statement is accredited on the *basis* of certain others, their *support* of it must be genuine; the passage from *evidence* to *conclusion* must be legitimate. And it is at this point that the sceptic attacks. He produces arguments to show that the *steps* which we presume to be legitimate are not so at all" (76).

Ayer seems to think that, in the light of his fairly orthodox account of knowing, one can see quite plainly the point, or points, at which the sceptic's attack goes in. But nothing in that account exposes these points. "When a statement is accredited on the basis of certain others. . . ." But what when a statement is not accredited on the basis of others? What when we "decide that no further reason is required"? We often in fact decide this (or do not even *decide*, do not even raise the question) at a level too high for the sceptic's attack to begin ("I saw it there myself" *entails* "It was there"). There seems to be a confusion, or the suggestion of a confusion, between statements (claims, convictions) for which a backing *can* be supplied if demanded; and statements for which a backing is, or ought to be, demanded. Perhaps there is no statement at all such that the demand for a backing for it could not be met in *some* way, if the demand were pressed. But, if this is so, and if we say that whenever the demand can be met in any way, it ought to be pressed, then we shall never reach the point of conceding (with a good conscience) any knowledge-claim at all. This is too much for the sceptic (Ayer's sceptic). And if we say that it is correct to stop pressing the demand at the point where reasonable men do stop (at the point where there is no reason for pressing it further), then we shall find we have stopped with statements which are, or entail, statements about material bodies, the past, other people's feelings, etc. But this is too little for the sceptic. If the sceptic's doubts are to get even an initial hold, we must say neither of these things: we must say something betwixt and between.

Of course, Ayer is aware of this. His independent efforts in the third chapter to secure a starting-point for philosophical doubts about perception show that he is aware of it. Yet the first two chap-

ters, which are supposed to bring out the connections between our concept of knowing and the nature of philosophical scepticism, seem to me to obscure, rather than to illuminate, this important point.

There are many matters, comparatively of detail, in these first two chapters which I should like to discuss. I confine myself to one.

Ayer says that one of the conditions of knowing is "having the right to be sure." Now, first, if one doesn't have the right, presumably one ought not to be sure. But even an epistemological "ought" seems to imply "can"; and it is not clear that the degree of one's conviction is a matter of the will. Being sure is not an action. *Saying* "I know" *is* an action; and one may sometimes mislead people by saying it without further ado, even when one is sure; for they may think one has grounds of a sort one does not have, or is in a position one is not in. So perhaps "the right to say 'I know' " would be a better phrase. But then saying "Such-and-such is the case," without further ado, might have the same effect as saying "I know." If, when one says the former, somebody asks, "How do you know?" one cannot reply: "I didn't say I knew: I only said it was so." So perhaps a still better phrase than "the right to say 'I know' " would be "the right to assert, without further ado, either that p or that one knows that p"; further ado being something like: "I am convinced that p, although I have no satisfactory account to give of the source of my conviction." But perhaps this is not quite right either. For I might be eccentric in my own views as to what counts as a satisfactory account, or wrong in my views of the customary views on this matter. However we settle this question, another arises. Is the right to say "I know" (or to say, without qualification, that p) a necessary condition of knowing? Ayer's own example, on pp. 31–32, raises a doubt. Might not y have the right to say "x knows" even if x has not the right to say "I know"? For y might know, and x not know, that x had always been right about certain things of which he was sure, though unable to give a satisfactory account of the sources of his conviction. But if one concedes to y the right to say "x knows" in this case, why not in every case where x is sure and y (but not x) has the right to say "I know"? So knowing does not entail the possession of the right to say "I know." But now this seems very odd. Surely a man must have the right to say he knows, if he *does* know. It seems that we need more detail on this question.—A minor point in the same region: Ayer commits himself to the view that a man may be completely sure and right and yet be guessing (31). This is surely wrong: being completely sure excludes guessing, even if it does not, together with being right, entail knowing.

Perception. Let us consider first Ayer's necessary efforts to secure a starting-point for philosophical doubts about perception or, more

generally, about the entire class of statements which assert or entail the existence of physical objects. It will be enough to consider perceptual claims belonging to this class; for they are clearly fundamental. The starting-place is secured, Ayer says, if it can be shown that, whenever we make a perceptual claim of this kind, we proceed from *premises* to a *conclusion* which they do not entail, that the perceptual claim is always based on an *inference* of which the *conclusion* goes beyond the *evidence*; what the sceptic requires is that there be a "gap between *evidence* and *conclusion*" (cf. 81–82, 91, 124, etc.). One who denies that perceptual claims about physical objects are always like this (and thereby refuses to allow the sceptic his starting-point) is called a naïve realist. He is also less flatteringly described. He displays the "general attitude" of "intuitionism." "It is in the same spirit that philosophers maintain that they intuit moral values, or try to justify induction by claiming the power of apprehending necessary connections between events" (85). The naïve realist is a philosophical philistine: he denies the possibility of questions which can in fact be asked, refuses to consider distinctions which can in fact be drawn (125). These charges should be carefully weighed. Surely, one might think, I could be a naïve realist on the "denial of inference" test, without falling into such philistinism as this.

Ayer aims to show that, as regards his starting-place, the sceptic is right and the naïve realist wrong. He seeks to do this by introducing a class of statements which do not entail material object statements, but some member of which is true whenever a perceptual claim, true or false, is sincerely made. He points out that such an introduction raises the question: what is the exact relationship between these statements on the one hand, and the corresponding perceptual claims on the other? He does not point out that from the bare fact that such a class of statements can be introduced it in no way follows that the introduced statements function as the premises of inferences of which statements asserting or entailing the existence of material objects are the conclusions. Nor does he point out that the question, "How are the introduced statements related to material object statements?" may be, not only raised, but also settled, by the mode of their introduction.

The introduced statements are to be statements of "immediate experience," descriptions of "hard data" or of "appearances." Let us consider what requirements these data must satisfy. To meet the needs of the sceptic (as described by Ayer), the data must at least be such that the maker of the perceptual claim is, in however weak a sense, aware of their existence and character. This requirement follows from the fact that the hard data needed by the sceptic must always be such as can serve the maker of the perceptual claim as the

"evidential basis" for his claim. The data could hardly do this if the maker of the claim was altogether unaware of them. No doubt he does not usually stop to formulate a "hard" premise, being in such haste to "go beyond" the data and make a perceptual claim. But he must have been able, given that he was articulate enough, to produce such a premise, even if he did not think of trying. This I shall call the first requirement. It might be said that the first requirement is guaranteed by the description of the data as "experiences"; and I am quite willing to allow this. The second requirement is that such experiences should occur whenever a perceptual claim is sincerely made or, more broadly, whenever a perceptual judgment is made. The third requirement is a little more difficult to state. It comes up when Ayer is casting around for a way of formulating descriptions of these experiences. He considers the phrase, "it seems to me that," e.g. "it seems to me that I see a cigarette-case." The trouble with this phrase, he says, is that, as we ordinarily use it, it often amounts to saying that we are inclined to judge, though tentatively, that we do see a cigarette-case, i.e. that there is a cigarette-case there. If we are to use the phrase for the purpose in hand, he says, it must be understood as not used in quite this ordinary way. For what is wanted is a type of description of experiences (data, appearances) which carries no implication whatever about any perceptual judgment which we make or are inclined to make on the strength of them, or about the degree of confidence with which we are inclined to make such judgments (112). The third requirement, then, is just that all experiences of the class concerned should be capable of being accurately described in this non-committal way. Here begins my difficulty. For I am strongly of the opinion that there is no class of experiences which satisfies all three of these requirements. I think there *are* experiences which satisfy the third requirement; but they do not satisfy the second. I think there *are* experiences which satisfy the second requirement; but they do not satisfy the third. And I think the minimum price one has to pay for saying that there are things of some sort which satisfy both the second and third requirements is to give up the requirement that they should be experiences, i.e. to give up the first requirement. Roughly, the dilemma is this. If the experiences are to be such that we *cannot* make a perceptual judgment without having them, then in many cases (I maintain) they cannot be accurately described without indicating what perceptual judgment we made, or were inclined to make, when we had them. And if they are to be such as can be accurately described without indicating the nature of a perceptual judgment we made or were inclined to make when we had them—when we have such experiences as this, there may be no such inclination—then they are not such as must or do invariably accompany perceptual judgments. Finally, if

we insist that there is something or other which invariably accompanies perceptual judgments, and which can be accurately described without any of the undesired implications, then there is no reason left for calling the thing an experience, no reason for denying that we may be totally unaware of it.

Now the sceptic cannot give up the first requirement; for he does need his data to be things which supply someone with an evidential basis for a conclusion. And he cannot give up the second requirement; for it is the entire class of statements asserting or entailing the existence of material objects which is the target of his scepticism. But why should he not give up the third? Why does Ayer insist on the third requirement? The answer, I think, is, roughly, that the third requirement is needed for the same reason as the first. For it seems senseless to say that one "inferred" (or tentatively inferred) a judgment from a "premise" the statement of which indispensably includes the statement that one made, or was inclined to make, the judgment. It seems absurd to speak of a "step" (or a half-step) from one thing to another thing when the first thing cannot be described without mentioning the fact that one took (or was inclined to take) the "step." Unless the third requirement is satisfied, the whole terminology of "steps" and "inference" simply does not fit.

It is clear, I hope, that I am not disputing the possibility of introducing a class of statements, descriptive of experience, no member of which entails the truth of a material object statement, but some member of which is true whenever a perceptual judgment, true or false, is sincerely made. For to say that such a description, if it were to be accurate, would often have to include a mention of the judgment one made or was inclined to make, is not to say that the description includes the judgment itself and is a true description only if the judgment is a true judgment. My point is only that the recognition of the possibility of this introduction does not, as Ayer says it does, involve "parting company" with the "naïve realist" who denies that making a perceptual claim necessarily involves making an inference.

In the end, Ayer himself parts company with the sceptic; but not with the approach to which he is committed by the language of "evidence" and "inference." "One way of expressing" his conclusion would be to say "that in referring as we do to physical objects, we are elaborating a *theory* with respect to the evidence of our senses" (147). Ordinary material object statements "belong to" (147), are "parts of" (148), the theory. I will not dwell on the extreme oddity of referring to the sum-total of material object statements as *a* theory. For if this is in other respects a *good* way of expressing Ayer's conclusion, then surely that conclusion must be perverse. It is possible to think of circumstances in which one who says "There is

a cigarette-case on the table" (148) might not unreasonably be said to be advancing a theory, or a part of a theory. But these circumstances do not include the case in which he can plainly see it there.

Memory. Ayer refers, at the outset of his chapter on memory, to a familiar distinction between two kinds of remembering. Let us call them remembering$_1$ and remembering$_2$. One shows that one remembers$_1$ something by performing in an appropriate way. Thus one shows that one remembers$_1$ a fact by stating it. Clearly one may remember$_1$ that some event *e* occurred in the past; for one may be able to state that *e* occurred. But from the fact that one remembers that *e* occurred, it does not follow that one remembers the occurrence of *e*. Here remembering$_2$ comes in. If one remembers *e* occurring, one remembers$_2$. Remembering$_2$ is remembering events.

I think Ayer here narrows the application of remembering$_2$ more than he means to. If I ask someone recently attacked to describe his assailant, saying "Do you remember how he was dressed?", I think Ayer would want to say that, normally, I should be asking the person interrogated whether he remembered$_2$ how his assailant was dressed. But if so, not all remembering$_2$ is remembering events. I do not think, however, that this is a very important point. We can, perhaps, construe "events" widely enough to include states of affairs which would not ordinarily be called events.

What distinguishes remembering$_2$ an event or state of affairs from remembering$_1$ that the event occurred or the state of affairs obtained (i.e. from simply being able to state truly what one has at some time learned, viz. that the event occurred or the state of affairs obtained)? Ayer considers the suggestion that (roughly) one remembers$_2$ if (1) one remembers$_1$ and (2) the event or state of affairs falls within one's own past experience (160).

He dismisses this suggestion on two grounds. The first is that one might, in abnormal cases, be said to remember events (i.e. not just to remember that the event occurred, but to remember it occurring) which were not included among one's own experiences but were, perhaps, experiences of someone else. The second is that one might, e.g. be told about some event in one's own past experience which one had forgotten, and thereafter remember$_1$ that it occurred without remembering$_2$ its occurrence (161–3).

The first objection can itself be dismissed. I am confident that of the various possible ways of describing abnormal situations of the kind Ayer has in mind, we should not choose any which involved saying that a man actually did remember the occurrence of the event he claimed to have experienced unless we were also prepared to concede his claim to have experienced it. The second objection, on the other hand, is obviously sound. Ayer says that it shows that a

"distinctive factor" is lacking from our provisional account of remembering$_2$ (163). He remarks, correctly, that in the case of being subsequently told of a forgotten experience, remembering$_1$ may transform itself into remembering$_2$. (One's memory is "refreshed": the distinctive factor appears.) He then has trouble over the description of the distinctive factor, and is almost inclined to say that there is no such (necessary) thing. But why must he say that a distinctive factor is lacking in the case raised by the second objection, instead of saying that an alien factor is present? The alien factor is the source, the ground, of the man's new conviction, viz. the testimony of another. What would show, or tend to show, that the transformation into remembering$_2$ had occurred would be the subject's being completely unshaken in his new belief even if the testimony were withdrawn, cancelled by him who gave it.

There is a point which Ayer does not mention, but which, unless brought into the light, is a possible source of confusion here. Of course it often happens that one *suddenly* recalls things, that things suddenly come back to one. But there is no truth whatever in the idea that these sudden recallings are associated only with remembering$_2$ and never with remembering$_1$. One can suddenly remember a line of verse; a date, a name (which perhaps one has been *trying* to remember); a fact about something as remote as you please from one's own experience; a rule in a game. One can even (I imagine) suddenly remember how to tie a certain kind of knot. One can *also* suddenly remember something one experienced or witnessed: the look of a face, a gesture. If by a "memory-experience" one means the experience of suddenly recalling something, then it cannot be the case that the occurrence of a memory-experience is one of the distinguishing marks of remembering$_2$. Memory-experiences are neither peculiar nor necessary to remembering$_2$. What distinguishes remembering$_2$ is, roughly: (1) that its objects (what one knows about if one remembers$_2$) either are particular objects of one's own past perceptions, or are one's own past sensations, thoughts etc.; (2) that the knowledge one has, if one remembers$_2$, is not "grounded on" or "derived from" anything whatever but those perceptions, sensations, etc., themselves.

It is not quite clear, from Ayer's subsequent discussion, whether or not he holds that one who remembers$_2$, or claims to remember$_2$, a past event, is making an inference or taking a step from an evidential basis to a conclusion which goes beyond it. This general kind of view has been previously described as the first stage of the sceptic's argument, whatever he is currently being sceptical about; and the naïve realist has also been generally described as one who rejects this first stage. On the other hand, Ayer says of one who is a naïve realist concerning memory, that he "wishes to represent the act of

remembering as being, in some instances at least, a cognitive performance which bears on itself the stamp of infallibility" (169). Now it is meaningless to say of a *single* performance that it is infallible; and it is also meaningless to say of a faculty that it is *sometimes* infallible. For "infallible" means, at least, "errs in no instance." So we must certainly part company with *this* naïve realist. It does not follow that we must part company with the naïve realist concerning memory, if we deduce his views about remembering from the *general* description of a naïve realist. And it remains unclear whether, under this condition, Ayer thinks we ought to part company with him or not.

Many other matters are discussed in this chapter. But I must pass on to the last.

Myself and Others. This last chapter, though not the clearest in the book, is in many ways the most interesting. Ayer begins by raising a question which he repeatedly expresses in such forms as the following:

$$\text{What makes} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{a person} \\ \text{me} \\ \text{one} \end{array} \right\} \text{the person that} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{he is} \\ \text{I am} \\ \text{one is} \end{array} \right\} ?$$

$$\text{What is essential to} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{a person's} \\ \text{my} \\ \text{one's} \end{array} \right\} \text{being the person that} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{he is} \\ \text{I am} \\ \text{one is} \end{array} \right\} ?$$

This is, of course, intended as a philosophical question, not a question of empirical psychology or individual biography. That is to say, we must construe it as a question about the kind of truth-conditions which statements of some general type must fulfil. If we are to take the above formulations of the question seriously, however, it seems that statements of the type concerned would all have the form

x is *the person that he is*

"*x*" being replaced, in any statement of this form, by a definite referring expression. But there are no circumstances whatever in which a statement of this form could conceivably be false. To get a topic for philosophical inquiry, therefore, we must change the form of the statement. The kind of change required is obvious. In the empty form of statement above, grammar alone secures the identity of the reference of the second referring expression ("the person that

he is") with that of the first, whatever the first may be. We must replace this second referring phrase with one that is logically and grammatically independent of the first in order to get a form of statement to discuss. That is to say, the form of statement we want is that in which two logically independent definite referring phrases occur on either side of "is." Now the question, "What are the truth-conditions of statements of the form, '*x* is *y*,' where '*x*' and '*y*' are definite referring expressions for persons?" might be construed as a question about the general criteria of personal identity; and this is one of the questions which Ayer discusses (in section (ii) of the chapter). The question, "What are the truth-conditions of statements of the form, '*x* is *y*,' where '*y*' is a proper name for a person?" may be construed very differently. It may be construed as involving the *prior* question, "What are the conditions of there being such a person as a group of users of a name understand by the name?" This is a question which Ayer very properly distinguishes from the question of the general criteria of personal identity, and which he also discusses (in section (i) of the chapter). It is in fact, I think, the question which he intends his obscure opening formulation to introduce. But he pays a price, in confusion, for the obscurity of the opening. On p. 213, after remarking that there must be general criteria of personal identity, he continues:

> If we can discover them, we can also give an answer of a sort *to our original question.* For having picked out, by one method or another, an event in which some person uniquely figures, or a characteristic which he alone possesses, we can say that *his being the person that he is* consists in his being the same person as is concerned in the event or owns the characteristic in question: the fact that we have given an account of what it is to be the same person will free the definition from circularity.

When we eliminate the unsatisfactory phrase, "his being the person that he is," from this passage, the doctrine that emerges is presumably the following: what is essential to the truth of the statement that *x* (i.e. the person who uniquely answers to some description such as "the man before me now") is *y* (i.e. the person who uniquely answers to the selected or "picked out" description) is that *x* should satisfy the general criteria of personal identity with *y*. Ayer describes this (innocuous enough) doctrine as an answer "of a sort" to his "original question." But really it is not any sort of answer to the question discussed in section (i) of the chapter. For that question, the original question, is in effect: "What are the conditions of our in fact making an identifying reference to a person by the use of a referring expression, such as a proper name, which does *not* rely upon a certain description's being uniquely applicable in order to bring off the reference?" and the answer which Ayer gives to it is, roughly, that there must be just one person answering to a

sufficient number of the more central descriptions associated with the name by the users of the name.

To put the matter briefly: an acceptable philosophical answer to the question

(1) What is essential to x's being the man who robbed the bank yesterday?

might be that x should satisfy the general criteria of identity with the man who robbed the bank yesterday; and an acceptable philosophical answer to the question

(2) What is essential to x's being Socrates?

might be that x should satisfy the general criteria of identity with *someone who uniquely answers to a reasonable proportion of the descriptions associated with the name "Socrates" by a group of name-users who take themselves to be using the name with the same reference.* It is a serious mistake to treat these questions and answers as not importantly different. Question (1) has no philosophical interest at all except as an indirect way of raising the question, "What *are* the general criteria of personal identity?" But question (2) has an interest quite independent of the question about general criteria of identity. Question (2) makes us realize that one has one's idea of *this or that* person, and sets us wondering in what such an idea consists. Ayer's original question is the latter: In what does such an idea consist? I am not quarrelling with his answer to it. But I think his way of formulating it has confused him and is, therefore, very likely to confuse others.

In section (ii) of the chapter, Ayer proceeds to discuss the general criteria of personal identity. And here we find once more, as so often in discussions of "the self," evidence of the extraordinary power and persistence of the Cartesian, or a modified Cartesian, tradition. Ayer first considers the suggestion that the identity of a person is dependent upon, or derivative from, that of a certain kind of material body, namely a human body. He rightly rejects such a view as unsatisfactory. But he concludes that the rejection of this view leaves open only one alternative: namely, that of undertaking once more the search which Hume undertook in vain, and which everyone who undertakes it must also undertake in vain, viz. the search for some relation between mere "experiences" which shall constitute them experiences of one and the same personal consciousness. (It is the more surprising that Ayer should think this, in that he gives (223) a reason why any such search must be futile: i.e. roughly, that it is *senseless* to ask, of any "demonstratively referred to" experience, whether it is one's own). Ayer, in fact, shares with most of those writers on this topic who avoid a crude materialism the belief that the identity of a person is derivative from two other identities: that of a body on the one hand, and that of an individual consciousness

on the other. From this belief spring a cluster of problems ("union of mind and body," "knowledge of other minds," "solipsism," "unity of the self") which prove utterly intractable so long as the belief is retained. What this belief must be replaced by, if we are ever to be finished with these problems, is the full recognition of the logical primacy of the concept of a *person*, with its own wide range of appropriate predicates, and its own (multiple) criteria of identity. We can then, if we wish, entertain the concept of the individual consciousness; but we must think of it (the individual consciousness) as something which derives *its* identity from that of a person, and not the other way about. We thus avoid materialism without giving ourselves the hopeless task of finding a principle of unity for the consciousness as such, considered as a primary concept. (We can even, if we enjoy the fantasy, think of the individual consciousness surviving in a disembodied state, and retaining the logical benefit of individuality from having been that of a person; though our enjoyment may be diminished by the reflection that the disembodied consciousness will retain the idea of itself as an individual only for so long as it contrives to keep alive the idea of itself as a former person—by living, perhaps, in its memories; or by eternally wishing to be, or thinking of itself as, a participant in the human scenes of which it may be presumed to be a mute and invisible witness; or by some other equally unsatisfactory expedient.)

Within the limits set by his beliefs about the concept of a person, Ayer is interesting and ingenious in his concluding discussion of the "problem of other minds." But these limits are, I think, severe.

Ayer's book contains much excellent discussion of points to which I have not referred; for this notice has been selective, concentrating on major points of doubt or disagreement. It is possible that this selectivity may leave a misleading impression. Accordingly, I wish to say clearly in conclusion that this is an impressive book: clear, concise, comprehensive and absolutely rational. It is altogether free from facility on the one hand, or uncouthness on the other. It sums up, in a form which could scarcely be bettered, a whole philosophical tradition.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF VLADIMIR JANKÉLÉVITCH

COLIN SMITH

VLADIMIR JANKÉLÉVITCH, who teaches philosophy at the Sorbonne, is one of the most highly individual philosophical writers in France today. He has been publishing books for some quarter of a century on both philosophy and music, of which the most recent, entitled *La Rhapsodie: Verve et improvisation musicale*, unites his two specialities. It is with his philosophical work that I want to deal here.

He first came into prominence with the book on Bergson of 1931, which Bergson himself praised for the "intellectual sympathy" with his own doctrine which he found in it. The next work was devoted to Schelling,[1] and this, along with the one on Bergson, paved the way for Jankélévitch's own independent philosophizing.

I shall attempt to compress and simplify his thought as I understand it, a venture of which he himself may well disapprove, since he has never been prepared to make any concessions, in the shape of summaries or distilled messages, to "young ladies, amateurs in a hurry, inept tourists or seekers after effortless pleasure." I nevertheless make no apology, but merely declare that his books interest me, that I am impelled to try for my own satisfaction to extract some thesis from them, and trust that my attempt will be of interest to others. I only hope that I shall be guilty of no distortion.

He is concerned basically with dissatisfaction, and with two things relative to this. The first of these is consolation which is engineered, the second is inspiration which is vouchsafed. The terms dissatisfaction and inspiration (which are my own keywords, not his) are intended to cover a variety of concepts and states of mind for which no single words are quite adequate, but which are related.

First, *dissatisfaction*. The starting-point of Jankélévitch's thought is the concept of a unity of being which is unaware of itself and therefore undivided against itself. Acquiring knowledge is a primal yielding to temptation, and this applies particularly to self-knowledge. Consciousness of self is the initial stage of detachment, of the division of the self (*dédoublement d'avec soi*). French, of course, has the same word for consciousness and conscience, which makes it easy to slip from the idea of mere awareness in general to that of awareness of pain or remorse. Jankélévitch would probably not admit that they are significantly separable. "Innocence, which is the state of man 'intact,' receives from self-consciousness its first fissure; the age of

[1] *L'odyssée de la conscience dans la dernière philosophie de Schelling*, Alcan, 1932.

shame and bad conscience thenceforth begins," he writes in *Le Mal* (*Evil*).[1] Detachment is the principle of pain and evil. This, however, requires some qualification. The particular form of detachment which generates impulses hostile to itself is what is called "demi-conscience." Clearly absolute detachment (*pleine conscience*) causes no distress. "Practical intellectual awareness delivers us from the actual": we transcend the concrete occasion, and construct scientific laws of a non-temporal validity, prognosticatory and retrospective. There is, however, a consciousness only half detached from its object, which fails to reduce experience to *problems*, as Gabriel Marcel might say.

Time is the obsessive factor in "demi-conscience." Consciousness is pain or dissatisfaction. It calls everything into question, and therefore questions happiness. The questioning of happiness brings the realization that we might be unhappy, and so contentment is seen as precarious. This feeling of insecurity is related to time. We are forced to take account of the future. Present pleasure is ephemeral and becomes, paradoxically, a principle of pain. The detached mind is aware of "absent things"; consciousness of pleasure will almost always be the pain of pleasure. Now it is in becoming (*le devenir*) that the awareness of pleasure destroys itself. In relation to the future the threat is obvious. From the past come sometimes remorse and always regret. Present contentment has an air of eternity only provided that it is unconscious, that is, provided that the second self is eliminated.

Consciousness is consciousness of time, and consciousness of time is knowledge of differentiation, of diversity, of the uniqueness of successive occasions, and thus, above all, of the irreversible and the irrevocable. The mere irreversibility of time engenders regret; where there is wilful misuse of time there enters a keen and painful sense of the irrevocable which is called remorse. The distinction between these two attitudes towards the past is made at length in *La Mauvaise Conscience* (*Bad Conscience*).[2] The important point to grasp is that time is regarded as the ground of that plurality which is one form of evil.

Time, however, is not the only form of division, though it is probably an element of every form. In his book on evil (*Le Mal*) Jankélévitch deals systematically with the various classes into which he divides the manifestations of evil. There is a basic distinction between what are normally called evil and sin. The most interesting and significant category of evil is known as "*insuffisance métempirique*," and refers to the impossibility of satisfying simultaneously all the demands which we make on ourselves and our world. This arises from the plurality of values which cannot co-exist,

[1] Arthaud, 1949. [2] Alcan, 1933.

and allegiance to one of which means exclusion of some or all the others. Man yields almost necessarily to "temptation" in choosing which value-demands to obey. "Temptation is the solicitation of beauty without goodness or truth." Beauty is the great temptress. If evil were also ugly and vice repugnant beauty would no longer be problematical. Why is it that truth may well be unpleasant rather than error, why is the good often repellent? "What kind of ironical and perverse purposefulness was it that once played us the trick of crossing goodness with ugliness, and beauty with mediocrity?" Man is led into temptation by action, which can never satisfy all the ideal demands simultaneously. The evil of disorder is therefore fatal to right action, for the choice which we make is necessarily exclusive of desirable possibilities. By acting we not only admit one potential occasion, we refuse many others, we create a realm of untrue alternative propositions. This partiality is the negation of a sort of purity.

It is evident, then, that expressed in the most general terms, Time and the other agencies and manifestations of division are in a sense forms or principles of evil. Becoming leaves, at the best, something to be desired. Now what consolation can be found for this state of affairs? For man never wholly resigns himself to the inevitable alternative. Consolation means securing from oneself assent to the plurality inherent in time and space. We are discontented because time carries away what we want to retain, or retains as part of the past what we would like to see undone, or imposes painful choices in the present or future. There are two rational solutions, or part-solutions, sufficiently clear-cut to be dealt with here.

One is the stoical solution of *banalization* or *conceptualization*, as Jankélévitch variously calls it, and which consists in denying the uniqueness and therefore the inimitability of the predicament. We apply ourselves to the destruction of our own uniqueness in such a way that sympathy becomes an intellectual participation in the feelings and fate of one another. There is a certain schematic generalization of the "here-and-now" into a universal truth which justifies the term conceptualization. My own pain is a single sample of the universally human. When applied to the supreme irreversible, death, it becomes, as Jankélévitch says, "a consolation of resignation, a consolation for Spartan widows, which does not answer my need because it does not compensate for personal absence by personal presence." The fact remains, one may add, that almost all life's ills are made tolerable, if at all, by the thought that we are not alone in suffering them. Even our "semelfacticity" (our life seen as dissimilar in its course from every other) and our "ipseity"—our individuality —are universally unique. The peculiar problem of military discipline lies in the fact that not all soldiers are killed in battle. If someone is to survive, why not I? asks the cowardly but not foolish infantryman.

So the best units insist on the greatest uniformity of appearance in their men, and all soldiers receive army numbers in order to emphasize that their being is ordinal rather than individual. Perhaps one should conclude that Jankélévitch's heart is after all in the right place.

But before passing on to the irrational solutions I must deal with one more which is intellectual. This is *irony*.[1] We are here, as in conceptualization, concerned with our attempt to meet the contradictory demands of the spatio-temporal world upon us. The compromising logos is seen manœuvring amongst a plurality of values within the measurable interval which is both the condition of diversity and the means of finding deliverance from its effects. The interval is thus, in Jankélévitch's language, the organ-obstacle of consolation. (We shall see that the "instrument of the heart" is not the interval but the instant.)

Conceptualization and irony have much in common, but while conceptualization relates our suffering to that of others and thus reduces it to its proper proportions, irony achieves the same effect by conferring mobility upon our thoughts and feelings. "Consciousness is detachment. To ironize is to leave the scene of action" (*s'absenter*). Irony is consciousness prevailing over its predicament. It faces the impossibility of being everything at once, it accepts the necessity of limitation, but transcends it by its awareness of space and time. It conceives the possibility of being elsewhere and later. In its most refined form irony is reflexive, turned in upon the self, and here it pursues the methods of economy and diplomacy. "Economy" is the localizing of the event in time by the conscious memory, with the object of normalizing the interior tragedy. We "date" our present, so that now the "historical sense" becomes our salvation. "Diplomacy" concerns itself not with "*justice de succession*" but with "*justice de co-existence.*" Irony is the slightly melancholy gaiety inspired by the discovery of plurality. Our feelings and ideas, we are told, must renounce their lordly solitude and accept humiliating neighbours; they must live in time and space with the multitude. We are thus humbled, but we are reassured; we forgo the illusory "freedom" of those desperate activists who extol chance and uncertainty and regard "determinism" as the way of servitude and thinghood. In its place we put true freedom, which is the awareness of necessity, and achieve thereby a "*disponibilité*" without tears or "anguish." "The disturbing mystery of chance yields to that infinite activity whereby the mind discovers laws, even within its own superstitions."

The distinguishing feature of irony is not, however, its intellectual origin, but its ambiguity and paradox. Language is the organ-obstacle

[1] *L'ironie ou la bonne conscience*, 1935.

of thought, sifting it into a stream, exclusive, achieving expression only through limitation, always saying something and never everything. This inability to say fully what we mean, the necessity of saying in part what we do not mean, and in any case the spreading of what may well have no temporal aspect into a temporal sequence, establishes a ground favouring obliquity and allegory.

Irony is therefore not direct assertion; the letter and spirit of expression are here always at variance. The ironist is concerned to put his interlocutor momentarily off the scent, but only momentarily. He says what he does not mean, but does not intend to deceive. Irony does not want to be *believed*, it wants to be *understood*. Irony is not the lie; the liar has an interest in being believed; he exploits his victim. The recipient of irony is an accomplice; there is a relationship of collusion between him and the ironist. Irony has an esoteric quality which tends to make it exclusive. It then becomes a game in which the ironist narrows down to the minimum the distance which measures his detachment from the object of his irony, to such an extent indeed that his attitude may become ambiguous. To explain the efficacy of this Jankélévitch says that the ironist has recourse to the feint in order to create artificially an obstacle which in turn may furnish the organ, the means, of expression. We replace direct opposition by ambiguity, a crude statement by a subtle and implied denial of what is actually said.

The Romantic ironist is the most exclusive of all. He is intent on seizing simultaneously the greatest possible number of aspects and associations related to what he has to say. He wants to rise from the definition of partiality to the vague—ultimately inexpressible—richness of totality. He tries to say everything and not merely something. He is therefore exclusive of all hearers except, strictly, himself; and inclusive of all things. In the time of René, Obermann and Werther the man of genius faced a mediocre society with the desire to be "misunderstood, slighted, while strenuously repudiating his environment." So "temptation" was avoided and man remains, at least intellectually, intact and independent. "Eternally an exile and a nomad, the ironist can find nowhere to pitch his tent; he is stateless, or, in the words of Novalis, a citizen of the world."

The evasiveness of irony keeps the mind on the move. It is the enemy of all spiritual exclusiveness; it disengages its user from passionate commitments, it sees, ahead, the mortality of every "everlasting" attachment, the present of the heart seeming eternal until irony deflates it. In the guise of humour it is consciousness detached from its abode, transcending "demi-conscience," yet not too forgetful of its former state to be sympathetic and indulgent, tolerating a certain complicity with its object. By constantly setting Alterity over against the *Hic et Nunc*, by its inclusiveness, by its

conceptualization, by its mobility, irony is the civilized consolation.

But Jankélévitch does not seem to think that we want above all to be consoled. Evil constitutes a more fundamental challenge than can be met by mere manœuvre. The qualities of intellect and temperament which assist us in accepting our predicament, either by comparison with other equally unenviable fates, or by the optimistic expectation of better times (what Jankélévitch would call the virtues of the interval, in that they require "room" in which to operate) are not the virtues which win his approval in his longest work (of 1949), *Traité des Vertus* (*A Treatise on the Virtues*). Consolation is seen to be "utilitarian" in being amenable to the methods of economy and diplomacy, to calculated niceties of profit and loss, and in aiming at a balance of the elements of emotional experience. These elements belong to "the interval" within which reason works. But Jankélévitch shows himself progressively less interested in the rational (and moreover selfish and introverted) forms of deliverance from evil, and concerns himself with goodness which, as does G. E. Moore, he sees as irreducible to anything other than itself. Its advent is instantaneous, not an outcome of the interval.

In a sense all questioning of reason tends to endow the instant with creativity. For Hume the anterior event in a "causal" sequence is not regarded as having any occult compelling power to *produce* its effect. Things simply happen, and the fact that certain sequences are familiar and relied upon does not make the happening fundamentally any less unaccountable. But Hume is all-inclusive in his view, whereas Jankélévitch is content to see certain tracts of reality as causally or sequentially connected, while others are characterized by "absolute" beginnings. This appears rather arbitrary, but from the point of view of his moral thought it is not unfruitful.

In *Philosophie première: introduction à une philosophie du "presque"* (*First Philosophy: an introduction to a philosophy of "Almost"*) (1954), his latest and most closely reasoned philosophical work, Jankélévitch expounds his philosophy of the instant.[1] There are three philosophies: the third is concerned with the contingent realm of phenomena, of observed recurrences and systematic knowledge. The second deals with the world of reason, of inferred laws, of schemata and essences: in short, of "necessary truths." The first is concerned with a domain as "positive" as the third, that is, as irrationally "posited," because it points to the contingency not only of what is but of the whole system of relationships connecting its parts. What

[1] Which is the "philosophy of 'almost,' " as he explains on page 210 of *Philosophie première*: "The Instant (is) between Nothing and Being. . . . According as we elect to fix our ideas in relation to one or the other we shall call the instant either Almost-nothing or Almost-being . . . but, strictly speaking, the instant is neither."

the first philosophy seeks is not the other order of reason, but the "*Tout-autre-ordre*" (the utterly different order) which is both meta-empirical and meta-logical, or truly metaphysical. In the rarified atmosphere of the first philosophy the act of cosmic creation, whereby the train of natural events (the "*cela-va-de-soi*") is established, is in a sense not distinguishable from the free acts of man the "demi-god." In other words, though God creates from nothing, and man from something to hand, nevertheless the vision, intention and resolution of man are as radically original and originating as is the divine conjuring trick. "Is not God the supreme self-creator? . . . Human becoming is a hybrid production: man "makes himself" fitfully and rather in a manner of speaking than literally. The rest of the time (which is all the time, since only the interval is genuinely temporal) man *is made*, "fit" or even "factus est"; man acts only intermittently, makes himself feebly, and then only in the privileged instants of his acts of will." One might say that on the human plane every instant is potentially creative, though in fact only some contrive to be so. The important point is that "the world of intentions is as different from that of reason (*le logos*) as the realm of reason differs from empirical reality."

"The world of intentions" does not include all decisions, some of which are the outcome of an organizing of conflicting values according to the principle of rational compromise. The logos is the philosophy of artifice, and the eudaemonism which it serves "manufactures a sort of sad good humour which imitates joy," but which is not joy, because joy is of the nature of a gift. These reasoned decisions exemplify the virtues of the interval which are consolatory rather than inspirational. The truly quodditative[1] virtue is that which comes from nowhere, and is not a mere equilibrium of conflicting forces.

So Jankélévitch in his treatise on the virtues prefers the virtues of initiation to those of continuation. Courage, love, charity and humility are better than fidelity, friendship, justice and modesty.

[1] The *Quod*, it should be explained, pertains to the instant, the *Quid* to the interval. The *quid* asks *what* a thing is (*was, quid*), *when it is in existence*. The *quod* concerns itself with *the fact that* (*dass, quod*) something must come into being as the content of the instant. Jean Wahl (*Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, Jan.–Jun. 1955, p. 168) compares Jankélévitch's *quod* and *quid* with Bradley's *that* and *what*. I think the *quod* is best conceived in relation to the immediate future, the next instant, when anything may happen, at least theoretically. Occurrence is here divorced from the idea of necessity and seen in its pure unwarrantedness. It is not usually profitable to consider this aspect of reality, since we are at almost all levels of human activity concerned with prediction, gaining control, justification, explanation or interpretation. But the stubborn quodditative ground of reality manifests itself in the fact that we can foreknow only schematically, never down to the last detail.

The virtues of the interval are the outcome of arbitration, the balancing of rival claims; there is always involved or implied the assent of a disinterested third party who protects the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Courage, on the other hand, is not an assessment but a decision, love is bestowed not because of this or that act or quality, but "because that person is that person."[1] This, clearly, is no reason at all, and therein lies its quoddity. Humility is not modesty, which gives *due* weight, if no more, to the claims of self; the *infimus locus* of humility designates "the fine point of quoddity which the instant inserts into the interval." We are modest because it is fitting; we are humble because that is transcendentally required. (The logical hiatus here, which Jankélévitch fills with altruism, is criticized in the next paragraph.) In other words, it is the illogical denial of self, which is not imposed by circumstances but assumed by choice in the instant. Real virtue then is entirely unrewarding and literally illogical. It does not console and there is no consolation for it: it is a mug's game. Theologians have been tempted to talk of the quodditative instant in the rational terms of the interval, and to promise a kind of post-war credit payable in a more dignified eschatological time and place. But this will not do.

One can hardly avoid pointing out that we can *hate "parce que c'est lui"* also. Nor is Jankélévitch silent on the wantonness of *méchanceté*, to be distinguished from the mere evil inherent in plurality and its imposition of exclusive choice. I have not quite understood the place of wickedness in his thought. It seems to me that the irrefutable justification of eudaemonism and utilitarianism lies in their basically manichean recognition that people are just as likely, if not more likely, to behave meanly and malevolently, or at least selfishly, as generously and lovingly. And that it is therefore better to use one's head in order to co-exist with a multitude of prosperous sinners than one's heart in order to be in a minority of dispossessed saints. To aim, utilitarian-wise, at the least unhappiness of the greatest number is to seek to provide the necessary, if not sufficient, conditions of worthwhile human life, bearing in mind the unpleasant as well as the pleasant tricks which quoddity can play. Good management is a better antidote to original sin, both in the soul and in society, than the categorical imperative. But this is the view of an unregenerate Englishman of Welfare provenance. It is, perhaps, nevertheless good to be reminded that saintliness is not just sound investment. However, let Jankélévitch speak for himself

[1] The moral question here discussed is discussed too in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1954–55, in articles by E. Gellner and R. M. Hare, and is taken up again by Gellner in *Analysis* for April, 1956.

on this: "If there is contentment to be found in continuing, preserving and imitating, there is quodditative joy in beginning, in giving, in creating. . . . Creating, beginning, giving: these generative instants are epitomized in the joyous impulse of love, which is the human re-enactment of the initial creative act" (*ces instants prévenants se résument dans le joyeux mouvement d'amour, qui est la reposition humaine de la position fondatrice*).

One source of interest in reading contemporary French philosophy is the constant realization that beneath utter dissimilarity of style and approach these writers are often enough dealing with the same questions as their English colleagues. This should not be surprising, but in view of the present state of Anglo-French philosophical relations, it is. No two writers could, superficially, remind one less of each other than Vladimir Jankélévitch and Gilbert Ryle. Yet just as Ryle, in his reduction to the absurd of Cartesian dualism, points to the implied infinite regress of ghosts in the machine, each one ghostlier than its slightly more phenomenal neighbour, operating each other successively by a mysterious process of causation until eventually a bodily act emerges, so Jankélévitch declares that the *Quod* expresses not the Because but the Fact-that. The idea of pre-existence is the source of confusion which the Frenchman seizes upon, just as Ryle seizes on that of alleged spectral rehearsals.[1] Plato's attachment to a world of models, says Jankélévitch, shows that he rules out any being without a pre-existence, any "creation" which does not presuppose a pre-scheme, pre-notion or preconception. The initial invention of this *Pre-* presents no problem with which Plato deals.

Jankélévitch's recent *First Philosophy* deals fascinatingly with the more metaphysical aspects of the problem of radical origin. I have concerned myself here with moral questions because I think that it is possible thereby to show the continuity of his pre-war and post-war writing. It is by taking his work over some twenty-five years that one seems to see a move from a position in which it is thought legitimate to seek rational consolation, to one which looks only to creative action as worth while. This creative act is not contrived (as the economy and diplomacy of irony are contrived). It is received. The attitude which favours this reception is seriousness (*le sérieux*) which simply does its best. It is active in the tasks of the interval, turning its back on the sources of its satisfaction and

[1] The following appears to me a Rylean idea transposed into Jankélévitch's language and mould of thought: "God raises himself continually from nothing and creates by creating, somewhat as the human creature, according to Aristotle, becomes a blacksmith by shoeing horses and a zitherist by playing the zither; what would have to be fore-known in order to do is learnt by actually doing" (*Philosophie première*, p. 184).

inspiration, allowing itself to be overtaken and surprised by them.[1] "Pleasure is never an immanent manner of being, but an increase, something superadded or fortuitous which is always 'into the bargain,' like a present."

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[1] This is somewhat reminiscent of F. Alquié's exposition of the role of reason in the last section of his *Le Désir d'Eternité* entitled "La sagesse de Descartes."

WHAT MORALITY IS NOT

ALASDAIR MacINTYRE

THE central task to which contemporary moral philosophers have addressed themselves is that of listing the distinctive characteristics of moral utterances. In this paper I am concerned to propound an entirely negative thesis about these characteristics. It is widely held that it is of the essence of moral valuations that they are universalisable and prescriptive. This is the contention which I wish to deny. I shall proceed by first examining the thesis that moral judgments are necessarily and essentially universalisable and then the thesis that their distinctive function is a prescriptive one. But as the argument proceeds I shall be unable to separate the discussion of the latter thesis from that of the former.

I

Are moral judgments essentially and necessarily universalisable? The contention that they are is expressed in its most illuminating form in Mr. R. M. Hare's paper on "Universalisability" (*P.A.S.* 1954–55, pp. 295–312). Mr. Hare borrows his terminology from Mr. E. Gellner's paper on "Logic and Ethics" (*P.A.S.* 1954–55, pp. 157–78) where Mr. Gellner distinguishes what he calls U-type and E-type valuations. A U-type valuation is an application of "a rule wholly devoid of any personal reference, a rule containing merely predicates (descriptions) and logical terms" (p. 163). An E-type valuation is one containing some uneliminable personal reference. Hare's thesis is that moral judgments are U-type valuations. To give a reason for an action is not necessarily to commit oneself to such a valuation "for I see no grounds in common language for confining the word 'reason' to reasons involving U-type rules" (p. 278). But Hare goes on to say that his thesis "is analytic in virtue of the meaning of the word 'moral.'"

What this amounts to is made very plain in an imaginary conversation which Mr. Hare constructs between a "Kantian" and an "Existentialist." This runs as follows:

E.: "You oughtn't to do that."

K.: "So you think that one oughtn't to do that kind of thing?"

E.: "I think nothing of the kind; I say only that *you* oughtn't to do *that*."

K.: "Don't you even imply that a person like me in circumstances of this kind oughtn't to do that kind of thing when the other people involved are the sort of people that they are?"

E.: "No; I say only that *you* oughtn't to do *that*."

K.: "Are you making a moral judgment?"

E.: "Yes."

K.: "In that case I fail to understand your use of the word 'moral.'"

Mr. Hare's comment on this is: "Most of us would be as baffled as the 'Kantian'; and indeed we should be hard put to it to think of *any* use of the word 'ought,' moral or non-moral, in which the 'Existentialist's' remarks would be comprehensible. Had the 'Existentialist' said 'Don't do that,' instead of 'You oughtn't to do that,' the objections of the 'Kantian' could not have been made; this illustrates one of the main differences between 'ought' and ordinary imperatives" (pp. 304–5).

The crux then of Hare's position is the contention that whenever anyone says "I, you or he ought to do so-and-so," they are thereby committing themselves to the maxim "One ought to do so-and-so." This commitment is embodied in the meaning of the word "ought" in so far as "ought" is used morally—and indeed, Hare seems to say, in non-moral uses of "ought" also. But is this contention in fact correct? Consider the following example which is borrowed from Sartre (*L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme*, pp. 39–42). One of Sartre's pupils was confronted during the war with the alternatives of leaving France to join de Gaulle or of staying to look after his mother. His brother had been killed in the German offensive in 1940 and his father was a collaborator. These circumstances had left him with a strong feeling that he was responsible as a patriot and they had left his mother in a state of almost complete dependence upon him. What should he do? Stay with his mother or escape to England? Sartre uses this problem in order to argue that there are no "objective" criteria by which such a choice may be made. Part of the force of his argument is this. Someone faced with such a decision might choose either to stay or to go without attempting to legislate for anyone else in a similar position. He might decide what to do without being willing to allow that anyone else who chose differently was blameworthy. He might legitimately announce his choice by saying, "I have decided that I ought to stay with my mother." If he did so, his use of "ought" would not express any appeal to a universalisable principle. It would not be a U-type valuation, but it would be a moral valuation.

Two points need to be made about this example. The first concerns the function of "I ought to do so-and-so" when it is used to announce a decision in a case like that of Sartre's pupil. Its use is plainly to commit oneself, to allow that if I do not do what I say I ought to do, then I am blameworthy. It is a performatory use of "I ought" in that its use makes one responsible for performing a particular action where before saying "I ought" one could not have been held responsible for performing that action rather than some alternative one. To note this is to bring out the oddity in Hare's treatment of the "Existentialist's" contribution to his dialogue. For in this non-universalisable sense of "ought" one could never say "You oughtn't"

but only "I oughtn't." To say "You oughtn't" and suppose that you had used "ought" in this sense would be as odd as to say "You promise" and suppose that thereby one had committed someone else to a promise.

Secondly, it might be argued that the very possibility of a problem such as that of Sartre's pupil presupposes the acceptance of certain universalisable maxims as moral principles. If Sartre's pupil had not accepted the maxims "One ought to assist one's parents when they are in need" and "One ought to assist one's country when it is in need" there would have been no problem. What is important is that the clash between two principles need not be resolved by reformulating one of the principles or formulating a third one. Certainly this clash could be so resolved. Sartre's pupil might have acted on the maxim "Duties to one's parents always have precedence over duties to one's country." Had he done so he would have legislated not only for his own but for all relevantly similar situations. But in order to make his own decision he does not need to so legislate. Now it seems to be a consequence of Hare's position that if the decision between principles is itself to be a moral decision it *must* itself rest upon the adoption of a universalisable maxim. This, in the light of Sartre's example, could only be defended by an *a priori* restriction on the use of the word "moral." Such a restriction, however, would not be merely a restriction upon our use of a word. For to adopt Hare's use of "moral" would be to permit only one way of settling conflicts of principle (that of formulating a new principle or reformulating an old one) to be counted as genuinely a moral solution to a moral problem, while another way—that of the non-universalisable decision à la Sartre—would be ruled out from the sphere of morality. To do this is plainly to do more than to offer a descriptive analysis of the meaning of "moral." It is to draw a line around one area of moral utterance and behaviour and restrict the term to that area.

What one can conclude from this is twofold. First, not all, but only some, moral valuations are universalisable. What leads Hare to insist that all are is his exclusive concentration on moral rules. For rules, whether moral or non-moral, are normally universal in scope anyway, just because they are rules. As Mr. Isaiah Berlin has written in another context "In so far as rules are general instructions to act or refrain from acting in certain ways, in specified circumstances, enjoined upon persons of a specified kind, they enjoin uniform behaviour in identical cases" ("Equality," in *P.A.S.*, 1955–56, p. 305). If this is so, then there is nothing specific to moral valuation in universalisability and in so far as moral valuations are not expressions of rules they are not universalisable. Secondly, the exceptions are not simply cases analogous to that of Sartre's pupil. A whole range of cases can be envisaged where moral valuations are not

universalisable. At the one extreme would be those instances where in adopting a moral position someone consciously refrains from legislating for others, although they might have done so; where a man says, for example, "I ought to abstain from participation in war, but I cannot criticize or condemn responsible non-pacifists," but might have said, "One ought to abstain from participation in war." In such a case whether to make a universal or a merely personal judgment is itself a moral problem. The fact that a man might on moral grounds refuse to legislate for anyone other than himself (perhaps on the grounds that to do so would be moral arrogance) would by itself be enough to show that not all moral valuation is universalisable. Or rather that once again this thesis can only be maintained by an *a priori* and quite unjustifiable restriction upon the word "moral." In other words, a man might conduct his moral life without the concept of "duty" and substitute for it the concept of "my duty." But such a private morality would still be a morality.

More commonly, however, non-universalisable judgments occur when a man finds that the concept of "duty" has limits which render it useless in certain situations of moral perplexity. Such is the example of Sartre's pupil. And such are the cases at the other end of our scale where moral valuations must be non-universalisable, where it is logically impossible to universalise. This is the case with what the theologians call "works of supererogation." A work of supererogation is by definition not numbered among the normal duties of life. Those duties—such things as keeping one's promises and paying one's debts—are partly characterized by the fact that the maxims which enjoin them are universalisable. But there are a great many acts of moral worth which do not come within their scope: one may be virtuous in the sense in which virtue is demanded of everyone without being morally heroic. A moral hero, such as Captain Oates, is one who does more than duty demands. In the universalisable sense of "ought" it does not therefore make sense to assert that Captain Oates did what he ought to have done. To say of a man that he did his duty in performing a work of supererogation is to contradict oneself. Yet a man may set himself the task of performing a work of supererogation and commit himself to it so that he will blame himself if he fails without finding such failure in the case of others blameworthy. Such a man might legitimately say, "I have taken so-and-so as what I ought to do." And here his valuation cannot, logically cannot, be universalised.

II

Crucial to the argument so far that universalisability is not a necessary characteristic of all moral valuation has been the distinc-

tion between first person and third person uses of moral valuation. Before the force of this distinction can be fully understood, however, it is necessary to inquire what the function of moral valuation may be. The argument of this section will be that there are a great variety of uses to which moral utterance may be put, none of which can claim the title of "the" function of moral valuation. It will be useful to list some of the tasks which even so familiar a form of moral judgment as "x ought to do y" may be set.

(i) The expression of indignation or other violent or mild emotion. This is characteristically a function of third person uses. "He ought to put his foot down," we may say angrily, although we might hesitate to advise him by saying, "You ought to put your foot down," and if we did so we would be advising as well as, or even rather than, expressing our emotion. Clearly, of course, we might say "He ought to put his foot down" without any kind of emotion and here we would presumably be prescribing a course of action. If we did this we would be committing ourselves to the advice "You ought to put your foot down" even if we never did in fact utter this advice. This brings out already how the same form of words may be put to quite different use in moral utterance. Those emotive theorists who said that the function of moral utterance was to evince emotion would therefore have been correct if they had substituted the indefinite for the definite article.

(ii) The expression of commands or exhortations. This is of course a second person use. As Stevenson pointed out, we may often say (to a child, for example) "You ought not to do that," meaning simply "Don't do that" (*Ethics and Language*, p. 21). We may, of course, and often do so use "ought" that "You ought" has more than or other than imperatival force, but we need not do so. Hare in his dialogue allows that the "Existentialist" would have spoken correctly had he said "Don't do that" instead of "You oughtn't to do that." But he does not consider the possibility that the substitution of "ought" for an imperative might be something other than a universalising of the imperative. Yet clearly in ordinary usage the use of "ought" might simply be an indication of the importance attached to the imperative, as it could be in the case of the command to the child.

(iii) The appraisal of actions. We can appraise equally the past, present and future actions of ourselves and others, whether in their absence or to their faces. This is therefore one of the most general uses of "ought" whether in tense or in person. When "ought" is used for purposes of appraisal, it differs from "good" in that comparatives and superlatives are not available. "He did what he ought to have done" or "He failed to do what he ought to have done" are the only

two verdicts available. So that appraisal by use of "ought" is appraisal that implies a single standard. If you made this use central to your moral utterance you would produce a morality akin to that of the Stoics where to fall from good in the slightest degree is to fall into evil. ("A man drowns in six inches of water as easily as in six feet.") At this point it is important to note that this use of "ought" is logically independent of the imperatival use. That is, there is no inconsistency in saying "You ought to do this, but don't." Those philosophers who have insisted on analysing moral utterance in terms of imperatives would be forced to interpret this as meaning "Do this (Let anyone in this sort of situation do this kind of thing), but don't," which would be as nonsensical as any utterance of the form p. $\sim$ p. But where the "ought" expresses an appraisal there is no inconsistency. For however morally reprehensible it may be, there is no inconsistency in pointing out what the moral appraisal of an action would be and then suggesting that one act otherwise. Some writers have attempted to argue against this by interpreting "You ought to do this, but don't" as meaning "In this society most people would consider that you ought to do this, but I think you ought to do that." But while this might be what would be meant, it need not be. A man might commit himself to a certain moral appraisal but not use it as a guide for action—"This in the light of morality is how your action would be appraised: but don't follow the guidance of morality."

(iv) The giving of advice. This is a genuinely prescriptive function of moral utterance. It is also one in which genuinely universalisable maxims are employed. For when we advise someone to undertake a certain course of action we do so in virtue of certain characteristics of their situation and certain characteristics of the recommended course of action. But while this might seem to be a use of "ought" which accords admirably with Hare's analysis, there is one point that stands out for notice; namely, that the giving of advice is always a question of second person utterance. So that while "You ought to do so-and-so" may express a universalisable prescription when it is offered as advice, clearly "I ought to do so-and-so" cannot function in the same way. For one cannot advise oneself.

(v) Persuasion. So much has been said so well on this subject by Stevenson, that the only necessary comment is to point out that the present list of ways in which "ought" can be used merely brings out the error of offering an analysis of "ought" which restricts it to one of its possible uses.

(vi) The expression of one's own principles. This is the most characteristic first person use of "ought." But I do not think many people say "I ought to do so-and-so" very often, and when they do, it is usually, I suspect, "I ought to do so-and-so, but . . ." or "I

don't know what I ought to do over so-and-so." In other words "I ought" is used to express doubt and perplexity as well as and indeed perhaps as much as to give voice to moral assurance. This point will need to be developed later.

III

This incomplete catalogue of uses of "ought" in simple sentences such as "x ought to do y" has one main point: moral philosophy to date has been insufficiently lexicographical. Even a partial enumeration of the differences already noted between first, second, and third person uses of "ought" (of which that between a particular first and a particular third person use noted in the discussion of Sartre's example now turns out to be only a particular case) should make us conscious of the need for a far wider range of patterns of analysis than any contemporary writer has so far offered. But, instead of enlarging on this topic here, a possible reply to the arguments that universalisability is not a necessary attribute of moral valuation of the form "x ought to do y," and that such valuations do not necessarily have a prescriptive function, must be considered. Against these contentions the following counter-argument might be brought.

The essence of moral judgments it might be said is their impersonality. When we judge morally it is at the heart of the matter that we "do not make exceptions in our own favour" (Kant), that the moral agent must "depart from his private and particular situation" (Hume). When the moral agent judges an action he judges therefore what anyone should do in that or relevantly similar situations. When he appraises the action of another he thereby commits himself to saying what anyone and *a fortiori* he himself ought to have done. When he decides how to act he thereby commits himself to an appraisal of any similar action by anyone else. Thus appraisal, advice and practical decisions are inexorably linked together. But of these three, practical decisions have the primacy; to appraise someone else's action is to say how he ought to have acted and to give advice is to tell someone else how to act. Moral language, or at least "ought," is employed *par excellence* in guiding action. In this form the argument brings out the inter-connection of the claim that moral judgments are essentially universalisable and the claim that they are essentially practical and prescriptive. Its force is further brought out by noting a consequence which Hare has drawn from the conclusions of this argument. Hare argues that to say that a man holds a moral principle is to say that he at least sometimes acts on it. A man who claims to believe in keeping promises but habitually breaks them does not in fact hold the principle that one ought to keep promises, according to Hare. Those who have objected to this

contention have usually pointed to the problem of *ἀκρασία*, have argued that if Hare were right we would not have the case of the man whose practice is radically inconsistent with his principles (e.g. P. L. Gardiner, *"On Assenting to a Moral Principle," P.A.S.*, 1954–55). But this objection takes no cognizance of the way in which the notion of consistency is built into this argument at the theoretical level.

Take the example of a man who appraises actions by one standard and guides his own conduct by another. This differs from the case of the man who is guilty of weakness of will, for such a man's conduct is consistent with his principles, or rather with that set of his principles which he uses to guide his conduct. He merely has two sets of principles. This is sometimes condemned by invoking the maxim "Practise what you preach" which is also, of course, used to condemn weakness of will. We condemn such a man because and if we disapprove of inconsistency between appraisals and principles of conduct. But while such inconsistency may be morally objectionable, it is not, and the fact that it can be comprehended to such a degree as to be found morally objectionable shows that it is not, unintelligible. Yet on the argument outlined about this is what it must be. For if the meaning of the appraisal "He ought to have done y" is even partly "I ought to have done y in those circumstances" (interpreted as "That is the maxim that would have governed my conduct," not "That is the maxim by which I would have appraised my conduct") then the man who asserts that he appraises by one set of principles but acts by another speaks unintelligibly. In other words the view that I am criticizing makes consistency between appraisals and principles of conduct a logical requirement. That principles should be so consistent is built into the meaning of moral words such as "ought.' But the demand for consistency is in fact a moral not a logical requirement. We blame a man for moral inconsistency perhaps, but we do not find what he says meaningless. Appraisals and principles of conduct are logically independent, although in a liberal morality they are required to be morally interdependent. And now we can understand why universalisability is given such a central place by those philosophers whose analyses are directed upon the concepts of liberal morality. For the requirement that everyone shall be judged by the same standard (the moral counterpart of the political principle that everyone is to count as one and nobody as more than one) in the sense that everyone shall judge everyone else by the standard by which he judges himself is so basic to liberal morality that it is converted from a requirement of morality into a requirement of logic. It is not part of the meaning of "morality" *tout court* that moral valuations are universalisable, but liberals tend to use the word "morality" in such a way that this is made part of its meaning.

It is worth noting a consequence of this transition from morality to logic, of a kind not unfamiliar in moral argument. If we so characterize moral judgments that we mean by a "moral judgment" an impersonal one, we make it impossible to approve or disapprove morally of impersonality in judging. For if part of the meaning of "ought," for example, is such that to say "x ought" is to say "x would not be making an exception in his own favour if he . . ." or "x would be departing from his private and particular situation if he . . ." then to say "x ought not to make an exception in his own favour" is to utter an empty tautology. This is in essence the same argument as that which Moore used against naturalism, an argument which, as Professor Prior has shown, was anticipated in many ways by Cudworth and Adam Smith. But as Professor Prior has also shown, Moore's argument is not conclusive (*Logic and the Basis of Ethics*, chapter I and *passim*). A tough-minded naturalist can save his position "by admitting that the assertion that, say, pleasure and nothing but pleasure is good, *is* for him a mere truism; and that if Ethics be the attempt to determine what is in fact good, then the statement that what is pleasant is good is not, strictly speaking, an ethical statement, but only a way of indicating just what study is to go under the name of 'Ethics'—the study of what is actually pleasant, without any pretence of maintaining that the pleasure has any 'goodness' beyond its pleasantness" (loc. cit, p. 9). Similarly an upholder of the universalisability view of morality could accept the consequence that it is a mere truism to say "x ought not to make exceptions in his own favour" and contend that all he meant to achieve by this truism was the definition of the field of morality. But if he made this his contention a further consequence would follow (and a similar consequence would follow for Prior's tough-minded naturalist), namely that he would have to abandon any claim to be offering us a neutral logical analysis of moral language. For plainly ordinary moral agents do disapprove of making exceptions in one's own favour in non-truistic fashion (just as they hold that pleasure is good in similar fashion). To assert that universalisability is of the essence of moral valuation is not to tell us what "morality" means or how moral words are used. It is to prescribe a meaning for "morality" and other moral words and implicitly it is to prescribe a morality.

Finally, one more feature of the prescriptive theory of moral valuation must be examined briefly. A maxim may be said to prescribe or to guide conduct in one of two ways. Clearly we might describe conduct that accorded with a maxim as guided by it and speak of it as the conduct prescribed by the maxim, if we were willing to adduce the maxim to justify the conduct. A man who habitually kept his promises might when challenged on a particular

occasion as to why he had put himself out to meet a friend or to pay a debt avow "One ought to keep one's promises." It would be natural to describe the man's conduct as guided by the maxim. But this is not to say that up to the point where justification was demanded the maxim ever entered his thoughts, at least since the time that he learnt it as a child. And thus the maxim guides conduct in a sense quite different from that in which a maxim may be said to guide conduct if we explicitly consult it when perplexed as to what we ought to do. Most of the actions discussed in moral philosophy textbooks—promise-keeping, truth-telling and the like—are in practice carried out without any sort of conscious reference to maxims. So that in the more explicit sense of "guide" where part of what we mean by "guide" is "to give guidance," "to tell us what to do," the relevant maxims do not guide us when we keep promises, or tell the truth. They do not guide us because we do not need to be guided. We know what to do. We tell the truth and keep promises most of the time because it does not occur to us to do otherwise. When we are tempted not to do these things from some motive of self-indulgence, it would still not be true to say that if we resist the temptation, the maxim guided our conduct. What guided our conduct was our decision to abide by the conduct prescribed by the maxim. So that in this sense "x ought to do y" prescribes a certain line of conduct but it does not guide us or tell us what to do. That this is so is even more obvious when we consider those cases where we have already noted a common use of "ought," cases of moral perplexity. When Huckleberry Finn wrestles with the problem of whether to return Jim, Miss Watson's slave, he is not guided by the maxims of his morality for his whole problem is whether to abide by those maxims or not. The maxims tell him that property is sacred, and that Jim is merely property. Nor is Huck guided by a new set of maxims, perhaps the anti-slavery maxim that "One ought to treat no human being as a slave." For Huck retains the same general attitudes as he was brought up with. (When someone inquires if anyone has been injured in a steamboat accident, he says "No'm, killed a nigger.") In fact in deciding not to inform on Jim he feels wicked and thinks of himself as wicked. He thinks of himself in fact as making an exception in his own favour, of favouring his own friend at the expense of morality. He finds his way morally by means of an only half-articulate sympathy. But he does not find it by universalisable maxims or indeed by maxims at all.

When you leave the ground of conventional morality, you leave the guidance of maxims behind. Yet it is just here that one needs guidance. Where men pass from one set of maxims to another, or act morally without maxims, there is an area where the logician and the linguistic analyst are necessarily helpless. For they are not presented

with the kind of material which they need for analysis. Only the phenomenologist can help us here and the kind of phenomenology we need is that supplied by the novelist. It is because the moral philosophers of existentialism have been primarily concerned with this kind of situation that they have so often resorted to the novel. For all that can be done is to exhibit the passage of the moral agent through perplexity. To offer us a maxim on which or in accordance with which the moral agent finally acted is to tell us what the resolution of perplexity was but not how the perplexity was resolved. In this clear-cut sense then the maxims of morality do not guide us, nor do they prescribe conduct to us. And to describe the function of moral valuation in general or of "ought" in particular as prescriptive is highly misleading unless this is made clear. The catalogue of possible uses of "ought" needs to be supplemented by a catalogue of those moral purposes for which "ought" and words like it and sometimes any words at all can be of little or no use.

One last point relating moral perplexity to the claims made for moral judgment as prescriptive and universalisable: here, as everywhere in moral philosophy, much depends on the choice of examples. Where there is real moral perplexity it is often in a highly complex situation, and sometimes a situation so complex that the question "What ought I to do?" can only be translated trivially into "What ought someone like me to do in this kind of situation?" This is important because this translation is often not trivial at all. When I am puzzled it is often useful to pick out the morally relevant features of the situation and of my position in it and, having isolated them from the particular situation, I am in a better position to solve my problem. But, where a situation is too complex, phrases like "someone like me" or "this kind of situation" become vacuous. For I am the only person sufficiently "like me" to be morally relevant and no situation could be sufficiently like "this kind of situation" without being precisely this situation. But what situation could be complex in this way? The situation of Françoise in Simone de Beauvoir's *L'Invitée* or that of Mathieu in Sartre's *Les Chemins de la Liberté* are examples that spring to mind, for part of their problem is to decide which features of their situation are relevant; part of their problem is to discover precisely what their problem is. And this brings out the point that it is because Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir are concerned with morality of this kind and in this way that they present and can only present their insights in the form of novels rather than of logical analyses.

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CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT AND POLITICS

Philosophy, Politics and Society, ed. by P. Laslett. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956. Pp. xv. + 184. Price 18s.).

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This book attempts to give a picture of contemporary academic politica thought by collecting ten papers by different authors. This task is made somewhat difficult by the fact that, as the editor puts it, "political philosophy is dead." I shall not for the moment consider whether this means that these studies are funeral orations, commemoration ceremonies, inaugurations of a succession regime, or just plain hauntings by guilty souls. The editor says that the murderer has been the movement known to the general public as logical positivism. There is evidence for this view, and I shall try to reconstruct the crime, if such it is.

Let it be said at the start that this is a useful book if one wishes to teach social philosophy without changing one's normal philosophical terminology. For good or for ill, it is philosophically contemporary, despite the fact (or rather, and obviously, *because*) little or nothing could be inferred from it about important contemporary general issues.

The ten essays fall into three groups, one of them residual. Firstly, there are those which, under one title or pretext or another, really discuss the general issue of the possibility of political thought, of the status of valuation and of political assessments, of the place of politics on the map of possible knowledge. These essays are best discussed in the context of the nature and implications of the positivist *weltanschauung*. Secondly, there is a group of essays which applies the principles and axioms of that *weltanschauung* to specific issues. And finally there is a group of three essays. Professor Oakeshott's, Professor Gallie's, and Mr. Laslett's, which are either by authors who do not belong to the tradition shared by the first two groups, or are tackling a problem without making use of that tradition. Professor Oakeshott's, which as an inaugural lecture has made its impact prior to the publication of this book, is more profitably discussed in the context of his other articles, and in any case deserves fuller treatment which I hope to give it soon and separately. For the moment suffice it to say that there are interesting parallels between his conclusions and those of the majority party in this collection, and even that there are parallels in their respective ways of reaching those conclusions. The crucial premiss in his case as much as in that of the latter-day positivists is the stress on the hard facts of actual human doings, the refusal to endow abstractions with existence or power, which incidentally in both cases deprives philosophy of its critical social function. Linguistic philosophy goes one step further back in its premisses. Its insistence on concrete activity is not a postulate, but is itself deduced from a theory of meaning.

As indicated, the majority of the contributors are profoundly influenced by the current linguistic movement, when indeed they aren't members

of its Inner Party. Now the central preoccupations, ideas, symbols and war cries of that movement are not social or political, but belong to logic, semantics and epistemology, with ethics and politics on the whole treated only in an extremely formal way inspired by logical doctrines, not by moral preoccupations. It follows that to assess the movement from its efforts in the field of political theory is to observe the small visible part of the iceberg and to disregard the much larger and crucial part that remains submerged. Happily we know about the submerged part from sources other than the volume under review. I shall treat the theme of *politics and linguistic philosophers* twice, once deductively and once inductively; once by sketching the submerged parts and seeing what one should expect the visible, political part to be, and once by observing the visible part as presented in this book and comparing it with the former.

Herewith a crude sketch of the submerged part. Linguistic philosophy has passed through two stages. First came logical positivism proper, an admirably clear and simple doctrine to the effect that two, *and two only*, kinds of meaningful discourse were possible. One was the eliciting of the consequences of a conventional code (e.g. chess, mathematics), though the conventions may never have been explicitly drawn up but only exist implicit in practice. The other was the matching of linguistic units (empirical sentences) with extralinguistic reality, again in accordance with a usually tacit set of conventions. Actual language was a *mélange* of utterances functioning in either of these ways, plus the intrusion of elements functioning in neither way and hence meaningless. The philosopher's job, by separating the two types of grain from each other and from the chaff, was to show us what we were doing and to eliminate the nonsensical part which was sometimes noxious and led both ordinary men and scientists to be worried by unreal questions. Note the immense force and appeal of the model on which this doctrine is based: given that language *is* visual and auditory tokens of certain kinds, what non-arbitrary ways of using them other than the two indicated are possible? The positivist model, if true, makes knowledge unmysterious in principle. If mysteries other than empirical ignorance exist, they must be due either to mere complexity, destined to evaporate as soon as the necessarily unmysterious and simple elements are located, or be due to plain muddle.

The well-known implications of this for ethics, for any kind of evaluation including of course the political, was that its assertions were technically nonsense, even if not of the noxious kind. And this led to a violent polemic in which both sides to some extent missed the point. Critics such as Professor Collingwood or Dr. Joad (or indeed those who still echo their strictures today) did not seem to appreciate adequately the point that if this doctrine is true, it is irrelevant to argue that it is harmful. Defenders of the view such as Professor Ayer tended to reply that giving a formal analysis of a kind of utterance, saying that no member of that kind is anchored either to fact or to calculation (and hence is anchored to nothing at all), is not to make pronouncements about the merits of individual and rival members of that logical type: and hence that the alleged *immoraliste* implications of logical positivism did not hold. Altering a famous aphorism of Marx's, he might have said that the philosopher's job

was only to understand language, not to change it. (Or anything else, for that matter. Their own impotence, the lack of implications of their own formal analyses, later became something of a dogma with some linguistic philosophers, if not a masochistic indulgence. Reacting against the wide claims of some traditional philosophers, their linguistic descendants are happy to boast of their own insignificance, of the modesty and minuteness of their labours.) Now for a reply along the line that "analysis does not alter what is analysed, nor affect its merits" to be adequate, would have required this dogma to be better justified than it is. It would require the following premiss to be *absent* from our minds: "Indeterminate topics, assertions from fields in which there are no objective, impersonal ways of choosing between a proposition and its negation, are not worthy of attention, obedience or respect." Now it so happens that this statement, or something like it, is believed or acted upon by many if not most people: and this statement in conjunction with the "formal analysis" does have the implications with which critics had credited logical positivism. In the collection under discussion, Mr. Weldon, the late Miss Macdonald and Mr. Bambrough return to this theme.

We have seen that logical positivists disclaimed substantive ethical implications for their doctrine, and in some formal, technical sense they were right. It is indeed true that from a general analysis of ethical statements as such no formal deduction of specific moral judgment or their denials is possible.[1] But they were right in this formal sense only. In effect logical positivism was a radical, destructive doctrine, even if the direction of its radicalism outside technical philosophy was necessarily unspecified. It undermined a variety of metaphysical, religious *and* common-sense ideologies and thus weakened the moral valuations associated with them. However much the positivist might protest that *qua* philosopher he is concerned with formal or "second-order" analyses, his doctrines inevitably made him a rebel or at least a radical, for they *entailed* the rejection of most traditional ideologies. If he accepted institutions which these ideologies defended, he did so for reasons other than the official ones. If the radicalism of logical positivism wasn't always particularly *poussé*, this may have been due to the political background of the time when logical positivism flourished. In the world of the thirties, more powerful and immediate considerations may have submerged epistemological ones.

The dispute is rather reminiscent of J. S. Mill's defence against the charge that utilitarianism would undermine morals and weaken the sense of obligation. Mill's reply was to bring in Hume's doctrine that feelings not propositions motivate, and that consequently the appropriate motivating feelings could be brought in to sanction Utilitarian morality as much as any other. Technically this is correct, but yet it is obvious that

[1] Logical positivism may even formally have implications of a first order kind. Take a system of thought S which contains a number of metaphysical propositions m_1, m_2, . . . etc. and a number of valuations e_1, e_2, . . . etc. *and* proposition *n* asserting that all constituent propositions of S are equally valid. The assessment which logical positivism necessarily makes of m_1, m_2, . . . etc., in conjunction with *n*, has obvious implications for e_1, e_2, . . . etc. There is no reason why we should abandon *n*. Many systems of thought are in fact complicated versions of the schema S.

by withdrawing transcendental status from an obligation its psychological impact is often weakened. This can be incorporated within Hume's schema of conduct which Mill took over; one can say that there is an independent emotional preference for non-contingent aims, or aims believed to be non-contingent, and that empiricism merely informs us that certain aims do not satisfy this condition. J. S. Mill's insistence that assertions of obligation do not have a transcendental meaning, and the positivist insistence that assertions of it have no objective meaning at all, have a very similar impact and logic. In both cases it can be argued that the discovery makes no practical difference; in both cases in fact it does, and in both cases this can be explained by assuming that certain other premisses about what is and is not worth while are operative.

But logical positivism proper, with its radical, destructive if unspecific implications, is with us no longer, as indeed linguistic philosophers like to remind us. The change in linguistic philosophy has not on the whole percolated through to the general public; but it is also true that the profundity of this change is widely overestimated by the philosophers themselves. Later linguistic philosophy no longer operates with the simple clear model sketched above. Instead of allowing but two kinds of meaning it is imbued with a deep sense of the variety of ways in which language is used and in which consequently words "have meaning." All these ways share, however, the very general feature of being *uses* of language—doings, attitudes, etc., of concrete people. The little word "use" employed in a very broad sense and occupying the key position of the new outlook, contains all the anti-transcendental and anti-normative implications which had been previously more openly displayed in the exclusive insistence on verifiability. But this is no longer a philosophy of elimination or *épuration*, but of acceptance. The philosopher is not a critic but an observer of usages. Now the starting-point of this new philosophy, of the rejection of logical positivism proper, is, oddly enough, something that the logical positivists had been perfectly aware of, namely, that their model does not fit language as actually used. For them, however, this only indicated that *in as far* as really meaningful, actual language had "ultimately" to be reducible to the model; if in some case it was not so reducible, so much the worse for ordinary language. The latter-day linguistic philosophers drew the opposite moral from the fact that the model never seems to fit: so much the worse for the model.

Now these contemporary philosophers falsely exaggerate the difference between themselves and logical positivism proper,[1] in as far as they have taken over a certain basic outlook and set of tacit premisses, of which the crucial one, that no transcendental knowledge is possible, is only

[1] Cf. A letter by Mrs. Mary Warnock in *Encounter*, January 1955, rebutting criticisms of contemporary philosophy by Mr. Philip Toynbee in the previous number of the same journal. Mr. Toynbee was technically quite wrong, and substantially right, in equating contemporary philosophy with logical positivism. From the viewpoint of what the general educated public wants to know, the differences are not great. The critic of linguistic philosophy faces the dilemma: *either* he will be accused of being out of date, *or* of not having substantiated his charges, for the latest and most typical representative of the movement doesn't publish much.

demonstrable by means of the rejected model. (The model has been abandoned but what the model had been used to show is still in use.) They always forget to tell us and themselves how profoundly their own practice is indebted to logical positivism, how much the conclusions of logical positivism are required to make linguistic philosophy, as now practised, at all *relevant*. Roughly speaking: certainly they understand actual language better than the positivists did; but if it were not for the continued, probably justified but *unacknowledged* central thesis of the positivists, who would dream of treating language, ordinary or other, as crucial for philosophic issues?

Now the acceptance of what is commonly said is, in the case of these linguistic philosophers, quite genuine. The doctrine isn't—it is important not to misunderstand them here—that anything that is commonly said is true, but that the kind or type of thing that is said is *ipso facto* meaningful. For instance, not that common beliefs about material objects are therefore true, but that, because material objects are commonly spoken about, statements about them are meaningful and do not need legitimation by translation into conjunctions of basic propositions or what not. The distinction between what is said and the type or kind of thing that is said works well enough for material-object statements, and perhaps for some of the other kinds. It works far less well for statements such as religious ones and in general for statements about the viability of which *as a class* or type there can be genuine disagreement; and this is probably one of the fatal weaknesses of this outlook.

What concerns us here are the ethical and political implications of the outlook. Logically, they are conservative. This does not mean that a person subscribing to this outlook cannot consistently be in favour of specific innovations, but it does mean that he cannot subscribe to any fundamental innovation on ideological grounds. He cannot call for the abolition of religion because it is superstition, or for a re-ordering of political life because some past ideological premiss has been found mistaken, or because some new premiss has been discovered. The practical implications of this outlook are similar to those of the views of Professor Oakeshott.

It is a conservatism of abdication, at least of the abdication of any systematic critical function. Philosophers have not in the past, by definition, been concerned with specific application; but linguistic philosophy having told them that with regard to general issues, no innovation or criticism is necessary or possible, that the general procedural rules embodied in "rules of actual language" are in order, it follows that there is nothing left to be done, except list and explain the procedures and correct errors made by those past thinkers who were less given to abdication and acceptance. When Kant once removed reason to make room for faith he merely did so in a limited sphere in which reason seemed to him to have no application. These philosophers do so with a vengeance throughout the field of human thought to make room for established but philosophically baseless actual practice, be it "faith" or anything else. The reaction to a procrusteanism which had tried to force all thought into one easily intelligible mould (i.e. to logical positivism) is the abandonment not only of moulds but also

of any philosophically inspired standards of criticism. One of the contributors to this collection has in another and highly revealing discussion[1] made explicit the state of mind underlying this outlook. Characteristically he describes, in that same discussion, rationalism in the sense of trying to apply rational criticism to religious and other doctrines, as "comic." The difference between past and contemporary philosophizing which makes the former often of great importance, and the latter often of unspeakable triviality, is expressed by describing the former as ridiculous! Only the inbred atmosphere of certain philosophical discussions, or a failure to understand what goes on accompanied by the assumption that this intellectually nude Emperor must have some Higher Clothing, can prevent one from seeing *them* as comic. Still, Mr. Quinton deserves much credit for having expressed this widely assumed view with admirable vigour, honesty and clarity. I hope I may be forgiven for this heavy barrage of critical comments on what, after all, is only a discussion in a non-technical journal; but my justification is that Mr. Quinton has in that place expressed so well what otherwise is half tacitly assumed.

This outlook faces the difficulty of accounting for the fact that traditional philosophers did *not* conceive of themselves in so passive a way, and indeed in many cases seem to have been highly influential—and *not* merely, as Quinton tries to insist, through aspects of their thought logically irrelevant to their philosophizing proper. As the current philosophers, unlike the logical positivists, are no longer keen to dissociate themselves from the philosophical past, this is indeed something of a difficulty. They have recently attempted to surmount it by means of a grotesque distinction between what they pejoratively call *weltanschauung* and philosophy proper.[2] It is a pretty picture: on the one hand, hard, technical but emotionally unexciting problems, distinguished from scientific ones mainly by their second-order nature; by working at them a modest man can make a sober contribution to human knowledge. On the other hand, florid and wild *weltanschauung* (rather un-English and non-U, really.) Only by an unfortunate historical accident the two pursuits have come to be associated with each other. But we have finished with all that. We concentrate on logical problems and the understanding of how various kinds of usage work, and we leave *weltanschauungen* to those willing to soil their hands with them. These philosophers are quite willing to bequeath *weltanschauung* to the intellectual *demi-monde* of "literary criticism."

What is suggested is a kind of complete, more than Marxist epiphenomenalism with regard to thought. All ideological wars, revolutions, reforms, and experiments must for Mr. Quinton and those like-minded be either self-delusion or grotesquely absurd conduct. (Some of it is, but not all and above all not necessarily.) The origin of this very odd view of Quinton's is something like this: from the theory that sentences must be seen in context of their verification, it was natural to proceed to the discovery that many sentences had contexts other than verification.

[1] Cf. Mr. Quinton's contribution to "Philosophy and Belief" in *The Twentieth Century*, June 1955.

[2] Cf. "Philosophy and Belief," *The Twentieth Century*, June 1955.

From this again it is natural to make the further step that these varied contexts are what gives sentences their meaning, and hence that it would be absurd to judge sentences, and hence convictions, by criteria that ignore those contexts, or indeed by any criteria other than those already contained in those contexts. It then seems to follow that thought and human activities are never open to rational, general, abstractly based criticism; that thought in the sense in which rationalists recommend it is never called for. This plausible idea that practices can only be understood in their contexts (with the less plausible and only half-avowed insinuation that they are always perfectly adapted to those contexts) is one which anthropologists have held under the name of Functionalism in a more open and explicit way. It is interesting to see philosophers approach it in an indirect way.

But whilst there is an important truth in this insistence that convictions must be seen in the context of their decision-procedures, and that these are extremely varied in type, sometimes vague, and built into the practices of daily life, it simply does not follow that thought does not have a dynamic of its own, that non-contextual logic is never called for, or that practice can never be criticized by thought. In most or all human activities some abstract beliefs are involved, and an alteration in these beliefs rightly produces an alteration in the activities; and sometimes philosophic reflection can rightly produce those alterations. This truism would be too platitudinous to assert were not Quinton and his fellows given to denying it by implication. His and their epiphenomenalism is based on no empirical evidence but on the misapplication of a theory of meaning (and on unjustified extrapolation from what happens in philosophy when someone tries to deny from abstract premisses that we can see tables, that time is real and so on).

Linguistic philosophy claims to have unmasked and terminated the fallacious philosophic habit of inferring from language to the structure of the world. The boot is on the other foot. Linguistic philosophy consists of inferring from a muddled theory of meaning[1] to a dreary view of the world: from the view that "meaning is use" to the theory that the world is substantially what it seems (i.e. that no surprising philosophical theory, claiming that the world is substantially different from what we naïvely think, *can* possibly be true. This falls foul, amongst other things, of the truth that what is naïvely obvious isn't the same at all times and places. As Pascal might have said, what is naïve is not the same on both sides of the Pyrenees). It consists *only* of this in as far as it sees itself as providing solutions for philosophical questions. Otherwise it also consists of a very impressionistic attempt at a sociology of linguistic behaviour.

The *appeal* of this doctrine lies in the image it gives the philosopher of himself. He can see himself as a man modestly and competently doing a solid, limited piece of work, quite unlike the nebulous, melodramatic, world- or outlook-changing and over-pretentious claims of his non-linguistic predecessor. A fine picture this, a kind of philosophical cross

[1] As for example in Professor J. L. Austin's "Other Minds," especially the summary on page 158, in *Logic and Language* (2nd Series), ed. A. Flew. For expansion of my argument, see "Use and Meaning," *The Cambridge Journal*, 1951.

of the bluff, straight-from-the-shoulder man and of the stereotype of the natural scientist who does one manageable job at a time, and it is well done when completed. All this must appeal to those whose upbringing contained good doses of warning against *flashiness* of dress or manner.

Unfortunately this picture is utter nonsense, for philosophy is essentially about *weltanschauung*. In general, the so-called technical, specific problems are easily soluble, and not worth solving, given the acceptance of a general outlook, or they depend for their interest on the existence of such an outlook. An *ad hominem* argument is that linguistic philosophy is itself a *weltanschauung*, however much its protagonists may naïvely hold themselves to be beyond all *weltanschauungen*: and it is quite an interesting one, with its tacit presupposition that there is no mystery or fundamental problem in the world, that mysteries which are not empirical ignorance can all be solved by clearing up our thought or language, that the world is substantially what it seems, that language is used in a wide variety of ways and that both the genesis and solution of so-called philosophical problems is to be sought in this variety and the fact that this variety has been disregarded; with its assumption that the meaning of any verbal pronouncement is to be sought in the context of real activities that surround it and that these justify it, that these should not be criticized from the viewpoint of *a priori* theories of meaning, and so on. Moreover it is this interesting and coherent *weltanschauung* which gives linguistic philosophy its interest, not the alleged minor advances which out of their context would be both unintelligible and utterly dull. (The question about the class of all classes not members of themselves is, out of context, at least as silly as the one about the angels and the needle; it is also probably a little less difficult. And note that many questions earnestly discussed of late hardly bear comparison in intrinsic or indeed other interest with that famous and, in its context, immensely important problem.) The fact that the founders of this outlook, unlike other great innovators in philosophy, try to abstain from explicitly asserting the overall view and preferred to *suggest* it by devious means, for reasons which are themselves a part of that outlook, doesn't alter the fact that it is essentially a coherent and overall view of things.

Finally, the argument against ruling out *weltanschauung* is this: linguistic philosophers do not say that there are *no* rules or criteria in the discussions men have about ethical, aesthetic, world-outlook, etc., issues, they merely say that philosophy is not to establish or judge their criteria. But if that kind of talk is governed by some criteria, i.e. is not arbitrary and random—why then the specification of the ways in which it is non-arbitrary *is* philosophy. By what right could one rule out one non-arbitrary and highly interesting kind of discourse in favour of an admittedly also non-arbitrary, but rather dull subject of the so-called "technical philosophy proper"? (Note that the old pure logical positivist could have—and did—rule out ethical and world-outlook talk without being in any way inconsistent, for he maintained that it was arbitrary talk, discourse in which no rules existed or could exist. But the linguistic philosophers of to-day do not say that. They say, nebulously, that such talk has its own rules of procedure. Mind you, they either leave it at that without specifying what

those standards are, or if they do, the account of such talk turns out in the end to be that it is a mixture of the old verification-by-fact and appeal-to-emotion themes, with minor variants that introduce nothing new in principle.)

To sum up: old "straight" logical positivism was in its logical consequences radical in that it undermined most if not all ideologies that are associated with moral values—which of course does not preclude individual logical positivists from holding moral convictions with vigour and firmness. The "linguistic philosophy" which developed from it is logically conservative, without again this precluding individual adherents from being psychologically non-conservative. In either case, both the radicalism and conservatism are so to speak non-specific and formal; it is not possible to deduce from these outlooks any statements as to the direction in which we should be radical, or about what in particular we should conserve. It is merely that logical positivism undermines most ideologies (admittedly revolutionary ones as well), but to do that *is* to be, negatively, revolutionary; whilst linguistic philosophy undermines primarily the possibility of criticism on principle or by philosophical theory, and even if it also undermines the possibility of validation, it is through this, in an unspecific way, conservative.[1]

The last point can be illustrated by the curious fact that linguistic philosophy is not merely held to be compatible with religious belief, but that the ranks of its practitioners now contain a considerable number of religious believers, and amongst these the most uncompromising and dogmatic of religious traditions is well represented. Of course, if you like and as Quinton insists[2] examining usages and solving "logical problems" as such, is compatible with *anything* (though not because as Quinton thinks, it is separated by a logical iron curtain from general issues, but because it has been made trivial): but if one thinks of the presuppositions which make usages and "logical problems" of interest and of exclusive philosophic interest—the profound nominalism and anti-transcendentalism for instance—one cannot but wonder. But I fear we cannot hope for a new St. Thomas who will square Wittgenstein with the Church as Aristotle had been squared, for what these philosophers seem to see in linguistic philosophy is not so much an opportunity for a synthesis but a reason why none is required.

It is amusing to reflect on how right, and yet how wrong, Lenin was about all this. His instinct told him quite rightly that empiriocriticism would lead to reaction, to denial of the outlook that required philosophers to help change the world as well as understand it. But his philosophical incompetence, his preoccupation with the Berkeleian analogy, and his lack of prophetic powers—shared by all of us—led him to a completely wrong analysis of how reaction would find its rationale in empiricism.

[1] I need hardly say that in either case, and especially with regard to the latter, linguistic philosophy, my diagnosis of what it ethically and politically entails or fails to entail is based on a simplified model which doesn't perhaps *quite* correspond to any individual thinker. With this qualification, I should claim to have captured by means of that simplified model the essence of a common way of thought.

[2] "Philosophy and Belief," *The Twentieth Century*, June 1955.

In fact, hardly anyone uses the argument from empiricism via phenomenalism to either theism, or mysticism which Lenin feared. Only pathetically loyal Marxists, totally oblivious to fact, persist in seeing it despite the virtually complete lack of all evidence. (They find shreds of it in some of the particularly obscure aphorisms of Wittgenstein.) In reality the connection *has* been established but along altogether different and new lines. From the premiss that words are words and mean what they mean (which is roughly true) it is inferred that things are just what they are (and, by and large, what they seem), irrespective of how we choose to describe them (a dangerously misleading near-tautology, which is usually invoked only just in the cases when it does not apply), and that in consequence we cannot ask whether in general some broad, basic category is applicable, but only in particular whether in concrete cases it actually applies, from which it is inferred that there is no call for a philosophical, general, systematic, abstractly based criticism of our customs and beliefs (which may even be true but is certainly reactionary).

The three essays which in effect discuss these general issues of the status of valuation, etc., are Mr. Weldon's, the late Miss Macdonald's and Mr. Bambrough's. Mr. Weldon's is a cheerful essay (impressively so to one of my melancholy disposition), clearly unperturbed by any of the issues it raises. One is tempted to wonder a little why, when cheerfulness not merely keeps breaking through but appears to be in undisputed possession, one should bother to go on philosophizing. This paper is not really about politics, it is about the status of philosophy in general, with particular reference to why it cannot have any substantive implications in politics. The premiss is that philosophy is essentially a "second-order" study, and this premiss is neither substantiated nor consistent.

The argument intended to show that philosophy must be a second-order study is what may be called the argument from incompetence; "What qualifications have philosophers . . . for . . . such a task?" (i.e. first-order work) (p. 22). The answer is meant to be an obvious *none*, and the rest is intended to follow. But this argument has plausibility only in empirical fields, in as far as philosophers, by definition, do not go in for empirical testing of their pronouncements. In a normative or evaluational field his *ex officio* commitment to the armchair does not automatically confine the philosopher to "second-order" work, for in such a field the "first-order" work does not necessarily take place outside the armchair either. And historically, if we must use this terminology and deal in these rough approximations, philosophers were people who did second-order work in factual fields, and first-order work in normative ones.

The inconsistency of Weldon's view emerges when he makes clear that there are some criteria by which political principles may be judged, some rules in the game of political discussion. "Any particular set of (political principles) may be (and should be) criticized on non-philosophic grounds" (p. 33). Does it not occur to Weldon that what is called political philosophy does and should consist in the main of this substantive exercise and not of the allegedly neutral second-order study which would fit into his simple and preconceived *schema* of what philosophy may be? Now

what is this activity, the practice of which Weldon admits and commends, if not philosophy? Or rather, how on earth can he justify his arbitrary *ukase* of withdrawing the appellation philosophy from that activity? (He could only justify it if, like the earlier positivists, he believed that activity to be essentially arbitrary and devoid of any rules; but he implies the contrary.)

In as far as Weldon tells us anything about politics, he tells us that political principles are essentially rules of conduct that are intended to be exempt from any questioning by those who subscribe to them. This will be news to debating societies, and as a piece of "second-order" study is quite inaccurate; it simply is not true that (p. 32) "it is pointless in this country to ask whether freedom is a good thing." Weldon's account of political principles describes the attitude of some citizens of Alabama or the Transvaal to the question whether their sisters are to marry negroes. It does *not* fit the complex and in large part reasoned political attitudes such as are discussed, for instance, in Professor Gallie's paper in the same volume. How is Weldon to account for the difference between the real 'discussion-stoppers' and sophisticated, rational ideologies? He might, it seems, want to admit this difference but make it extra-philosophical, by a ruling about the use of the word 'philosophy' which is as arbitrary as it is inconvenient. Or he might deny some of the difference by maintaining that the logical complexity, the apparent openness-to-argument of some ideologies is in fact spurious. But that simply is not always so. Even in a communist country the principle that means of production should not be privately owned is not an axiom but the conclusion of a long chain of reasoning to which some men have subscribed without being under pressure. The fact that in such countries a serious questioner of this principle might find himself in prison is a fact about the social structure of those countries, but not a part of the analysis of "political principle."

What leads Mr. Weldon into this error is a curious confusion between *arguing* and *bargaining*. There is some case to be made out for the view that "political principles" can be defined in terms of what one will not bargain about. If one's *principles* forbid some course of conduct, it follows that one should not be prepared to consider it even if the promised reward is raised.[1] But it simply does not follow that because we are not prepared to bargain, that we are also not prepared to argue. On the contrary, if there is any relation between reasoning and haggling, it is an inverse one. The very fact that something can be bargained about makes it less susceptible to argument, for the subtle and subjective evaluations of barter cannot be conveyed by the crudities and sharpness of entailment and contradiction. Supply and demand curves do not express syllogistic reasoning. But when we firmly take our stand, *on principle*, then the proof of inconsistency, the discovery of an implicit consequence, become of the utmost importance. And it is no use objecting that argument

[1] Though even this analysis may be questioned, for we have the opinion of no less an authority on first-order moral language than Lord Halifax that there are times in the lives of nations when expediency takes precedence over principles. Cf. Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 496.

would be pointless when we had already annunciated our principles: for we can take a stand on principle so as to inform the world that it is useless to try to raise the price, but not necessarily that it is useless to argue. Those of us, for instance, who object to racial segration *on principle* mean by this that we consider the possible advantages that particular cases of segration may bring irrelevant even if true. It does not mean that we are not prepared to argue, and argue in good faith, about why they are irrelevant, about why the principle seems to us important and valid. Only repressive societies employ the discussion-stoppers which Mr. Weldon claims to see in all principles as such. Intellectually lively and free ones may know topics about which some or all members refuse to haggle. but they know none about which they will never reason (assuming that they are brought into the open by being made explicit); and this is *not* affected by the truism that you cannot discuss everything at the same time, that you must make assumptions in order to act and share some of those assumptions with your fellow citizens, and that time for discussion is limited.

Weldon oddly enough is perfectly aware of one of the main ways in which analysis does have substantive implications, i.e. by destroying the epistemological props of political ideologies, doctrines about means of arriving at warranted principles; but he considers this to be a minor concession instead of giving it the weight it deserves. The interesting part of Weldon's essay lies where he attempts a diagnosis of why his second-order analysis is mistaken for first-order pronouncements. The reason is, he thinks, a misleading similarity between his second-order doctrine that principles are discussion-stoppers and the first-order statement in political sociology, associated with Marxism, that principles are devices by which ruling classes help to maintain themselves in power. Of course, Weldon wants to say that despite the appearance of similarity the two statements are about totally different things, but the only reason for thinking so is his dogma of the quite impassable iron curtain between first- and second-order talk (a dogma which does indeed seem to be a "political principle," a discussion-stopper, in Weldon's sense in Weldon's universe of discourse). Of course, there are indeed some differences. Marxism goes further in that its relativism about political doctrines specifies a mechanism which determines the emergence and decline of various principles: but in as far as Marxism says that political principles are *exhaustively* described in this way, it needs something like Weldon's positivism as a premiss. Marxist relativism presupposes positivism.[1] So, far from being neutral, the kind of view that Weldon advocates is a necessary premiss of a certain kind of first order political outlook, even if it does not by itself entail it.

Mr. Weldon says that the sin of the nineteenth-century philosophy was preaching, and he seems clear in his own mind that he and his fellows are not guilty of this. There is something comic about the missionary zeal with which Oxford, only belatedly weaned from seeing itself as the underwriter of right values, now preaches through Messrs. Weldon, Quinton and others what one might call the doctrine of logically necessary

[1] Cf. H. B. Acton, *The Illusion of the Epoch*, London, 1955, p. 109.

non-commitment, the meta-ivory tower. Of course, they would say that they are preaching not non-commitment, but the irrelevance of philosophy to the substance of commitment. But it comes to the same. Philosophy *must* always be either a theory of the criteria of correct commitment, or the doctrine that its direction is arbitrary. Logical positivism said the latter: linguistic philosophers are too muddled about this for one to be able to say which alternative they adopt.

Mr. Weldon's diagnosis of what is wrong with most old political theories (apart from preaching) is that they irresponsibly "upgrade" the epistemological status of political principles. He seems to have *necessity* and *certainty* in mind, but fails to distinguish between two or three quite distinct further things that are involved: (1) The upgrading of non-cognitive or arbitrary things to cognitive or uniquely determined ones: (2) the exaggeration of the logical openness or generality of some principle, of replacing here/now by always/everyone; and (3) the exaggeration of the extent of diffusion of a principle or the number of people who accept it. For instance, a very high grade under (2) and a very low one under (1) is the essence of Mr. Hare's ethical theory. Certainty, which Weldon chiefly has in mind, arises only if (1) has been answered affirmatively, and is almost totally independent of (3) which he also seems to be thinking of. Whom is Mr. Weldon justified in castigating? The question of (3) must be left to comparative sociology. If high grades with respect of (2) are to be condemned, Weldon will first have to refute all the neo-Kantians amongst us; and with regard to (1) it is the common man rather than the philosopher who is generally responsible for erroneous, unjustified ascription of objective validity to moral judgments.

Of course, the general movement of which Mr. Weldon is the ambassador to the *partes infidelium* of political theory is given to ruling out of court the idea that the common man might ever be *ex officio* speaking through his hat, that on some topic his very notions, *en gros* and irrespective of the individual use of them, should be absurd. (I am now going beyond anything said by Mr. Weldon himself.) This view of the inherent rightness of the prejudices embodied in ordinary usages is not *quite* as absurd as it may seem to those unconditioned by recent philosophy, for it is a simple corollary of the interesting and plausible theory that meaning resides in use. Roughly speaking, if meaning "is" use, then use cannot, naturally, be meaningless. Just as a generation ago philosophers sought the safe bedrock of meaningful discourse in sentences directly anchored to a piece of experience and not going beyond it, so to-day or yesterday they seek it in the locution whose indisputed use by ordinary speakers guarantees its meaningfulness (it all follows, you see). The view of philosophic procedure which follows from this is that you must either stick to these usage-authenticated locutions and be bound by their common rules, or, if you must depart from them, be conscious of, fully describe, and justify each such departure.[1] If you do not, you are either saying nothing

[1] For a striking example of this kind of reasoning, see Professor H. L. Hart, *Arist. Soc. Proc.* Supplementary Volume, 1949, p. 79 *et. seq.* It is interesting to observe Professor Hart's obviously sincere conviction that the limpid clarities of Bertrand Russell's thought can be shown by this method to be in some deeper sense

when you think you are saying much, or at best there is no telling what it is that you *are* saying. This plausible-sounding and widely accepted account of how we should talk and think, based on a tacit model of meaningful discourse built up from safe watertight bricks supplied by established use, is in fact grotesque, and completely misrepresents the way in which any original ideas are reached, or (if the genetic question seems to you irrelevant) the way in which an original idea is of value. To think that ideas, philosophical or other, are built up, Meccano-wise, from prefabricated bits is as complete a fallacy as the older notion that science is built up from the safe little bits of unquestionable direct experience.

The history of these views really goes back to the healthy reaction of common sense to Bradley, to the kind of philosophy which held it possible to discover by abstract thought that everything we normally take for granted is fundamentally mistaken. The reaction that Bradleian paradoxes provoked would have been hard to formulate other than "linguistically"; to say "we all normally think so, so it must be true" sounds feeble.[1] But to say "we all normally use this term in this way, so that this is, until we choose to change it, what it means," sounds quite all right, and within limits which have not been observed, it *is* all right.

But the fallacy which it suggests, or which has been inferred from it, apart from the prejudging of normative questions, is that meaning is manifest, that it is fairly easy for a competent, honest, unpretentious mind to tell what is sense and what is nonsense by simply looking carefully at how we normally use words. Professor Popper has rightly drawn our attention to the fact that the error of Cartesianism resides in the assumption that *truth* is manifest, and the same holds of *meaningfulness*. Much modern philosophy is Cartesianism with regard to meaning, Cartesianism with regard to truth having been abandoned and truth itself consigned to the scientist (cf. Mr. Weldon's remarks about first- and second-order studies). We are no longer concerned with the attempts to make the boundaries and typologies of meaning manifest by means of an explicit criterion—that was logical positivism proper; we are concerned with the idea that meaninglessness, absurdity can be safely and manifestly avoided by sticking to an established use and only departing from it, if at all, in explicitly announced ways.

But common usage is not a safe way of avoiding absurdity, and there is *no* safe way. Above all, even unexplained departures from it are not safe indices of absurdity. Linguistic philosophy disclaims having a general recipe: but in its *practice* if not in avowed doctrine, in what it counts as a problem and as a solution, it uses something like this. The inadequate and self-defeating nature of that way is beautifully if quite unintenin-

adequately endowed with meaning. This type of linguistic philosopher finds depths of unsuspected lack of meaning, just as his metaphysical predecessor found most unsuspected significances. The common man on whose behalf these doubly-sophisticated philosophers defend pristine usage would be even more surprised by their discoveries than he had been by those of the metaphysicians.

[1] Even if, according to Mr. T. S. Eliot, it is a sound principle of classical Indian logic.

tionally illustrated by Mr. Quinton in the discussion quoted, when from the plausible use-meaning tie-up he arrives at the absurdities he then has to defend, such as the total irrelevance of philosophy to life and even to religious belief; he in fact performs the logical miracle of deducing from a formal theory of meaning the substantive doctrine of epiphenomenalism of thought. (He notices this and by an uneasy qualification avoids committing himself to this outright.)[1] The possession of such remarkable logical powers should make him beware and re-examine his own premisses.

The truth of the matter is that just as in science many counter-intuitive theories may be valid,[2] so in the necessarily oblique, unformalised, often second-order, unhomogeneous pursuit that is philosophy, in exploring what has meaning and what has not and how that which has meaning comes to have it, there is no simple general test for arriving at our conclusions. Neither verification nor actual speech habits are master-keys for all problems, infallible criteria of a manifest meaningfulness. The only thing to do is to explore the consequences of our assumptions and see what happens. (As indeed Quinton does. I do not mind the fact that the consequences which he has deduced are absurd. It is that which makes his experiment useful in showing the limitations of the "use" theory of meaning. What I do mind is his obvious devotion to the actual practices of mankind—linguistic *and* other, such as going to church—as something that *cannot* be criticized by philosophical criteria. This devotion seems too firm to be shaken by the oddity of the inferences he has drawn from it.) I am not recommending a return to oracular mysteries such as "Time is unreal," though I am pointing out that the so-called Ordinary Language School has its its own inverted versions of them; and I am not denying that some absurdities are manifest, only that absurdity as such is, or that it has a manifest criterion.

The relevance of all this to the up-grading of moral and political principles is that this is a matter in which the common man, ordinary usage, may well be and probably is basically mistaken. I do not suppose that the philosopher can sensibly correct the common man in his assumption that material objects exist or that time is real, but he *can* set him right on the subject of the objectivity of morals. For in this matter it is the common man or ordinary usage, aided by some but not all philosophers, that is guilty of up-grading, irresponsible or not, if up-grading has occurred.

The late Miss Macdonald's essay about "Natural Rights" succeeds in really being about that subject to a greater extent than Weldon's essay succeeds in being about political principles, but still, it is essentially an exercise along the following lines: given that all meaningful discourse is either factual, or logical, or evaluative, what kind of meaning can be ascribed to assertions of "natural rights"? The answer is what you might expect—that claims of natural rights "really" fall into the third category and that it is misleading and even dangerous to misinterpret them as

[1] "Philosophy and Belief," *The Twentieth Century*, June 1955, p. 519.

[2] Cf. J. O. Wisdom, "Psycho-analytic Technology," in *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, May 1956, p. 16.

falling into either of the former two. That the argument is actually carried on within these terms of reference is a little odd in view of the fact that these are not the limits that Miss Macdonald had set herself: on page 37 she says "there are an indefinite number of different types of proposition and other forms of human utterance." In other words, she pays lip-service to what I have called the later stage of linguistic philosophy, the nebulous polymorphism-of-language tradition which tries to seek out the variety of actual linguistic activities, but the real logic of her thought follows the more clean-cut rules of earlier logical positivism. The real brass tacks of her argument comes in the final part of the paper when the logic of evaluation in general is discussed. Making less use than Weldon of the first/second-order distinction, she nevertheless tries to steer some middle course between saying that rational criteria exist and admitting that the moves in this game are abitrary. But can one really have it both ways, or rather, neither way? *Qua* observer, perhaps one can, perhaps one can be content with saying that both elements are present: arguments in politics, aesthetics, etc., are indeed a mixture of rational presentation of evidence and of trying, causally, to produce an effect. As Miss Macdonald says, "the lawyer . . . uses voice, gesture, facial expression . . . in order to influence . . ." But when we think of ourselves, in the first person, when we are interested in the rights of the case, then there are no two ways about it: to discover a mere causal influence is to *unmask* and neutralize it.[1]

The third of the essays which is in effect about valuation in general is Mr. Bambrough's discussion of "Plato's Political Analogies." It is to my mind by far the most interesting of the three. It is in effect about one particular, crucial analogy, namely the one between political and ethical expertise on the one hand, and knowledge in more indisputably cognitive fields on the other. Mr. Bambrough neatly opposes the Platonic error—because value problems can be rationally discussed, therefore answers to them are cognitive—and the anti-Platonic error—because answers to value-problems are not uniquely determined and do not embody knowledge, therefore they are beyond the pale of reason. Of course Mr. Bambrough cannot, any more than the other two authors, show us concretely how the latter error can be avoided once we have rejected the former, apart from repeating the old suggestion, best expressed by Hume but here attributed to Mrs. Barbara Wootton, that it is a good thing if we get our facts right first. Still Mr. Bambrough's point is a neat one and I should use it to bring out something that has been neglected of late, namely that dubious entities have in traditional philosophy had the important role of explaining how indeterminate or semi-determinate fields could be

[1] To avoid misunderstanding, I should perhaps state quite explicitly that I am not criticizing Miss Macdonald's and Mr. Weldon's crucial premiss about valuations not being testable as factual assertions are. What I am criticizing is a certain evasiveness in facing the consequences of this position, and certain inconsistences that arise when this piece of positivism is incorporated in the broader linguistic philosophy of to-day. The unwillingness to face this issue, often disguised as an impatient and almost irritable unwillingness to admit that there is a problem that is being evaded, is characteristic of the movement's position on this question. It is found in the otherwise much subtler analysis of Mr. Hare. Cf. R. Hare, *The Language of Morals*, p. 195, and *Universalisability, Arist. Soc. Proc.* 1954–55. pp. 302–304.

determinate, in plainer language of being guarantors of values. The current diagnosis of Platonic mythologies over-stresses the fact that such entities are would-be nominees or words that aren't really names, and tends to omit that they were also meant to function as arbiters, as judges or decision-procedures.

Of the essays which really deal with specific political points, Mr. W. J. Rees neatly analyses the theory of sovereignty. This is indeed a careful, painstaking, workmanlike job which does the kind of thing which modern philosophy claims it can do. It leaves us with a set of clear distinctions and answerable specific questions where before there was an embarrassing muddle and nebulous questions which did not seem to allow of any answer, nor yet of being disregarded. Mr. Rees' analysis is too detailed for it to be possible to reproduce it here, but, very roughly speaking, it makes clear that the notion of sovereignty was meant to do a variety of jobs that are in fact independent: mainly, to provide a final decision-procedure for legal issues and yet also a guarantee that right will prevail; to embody morality in law and law in force, and endow the result with a permanence, with an aura of trustworthiness. In this would-be fusion of *de jure* and *de facto* infallibility it is meant to do for society what God does for the universe, provide a reassurance that ultimately the management is sound. The appeal of the doctrine must be rather like that of the kind of belief in God which is an unwillingness to be seen in an improperly run universe, like the unwillingness of respectable people to be seen in questionable establishments.[1] Reading Mr. Rees one feels that one has the logical mechanics of the idea of sovereignty plain before one; it is not clear that one will want to use the notion again. But the fact that it is a post-mortem is not a criticism of the analysis.

Mr. Quinton's brief essay on punishment is at first sight rather exciting in that it seems actually to get somewhere with a live problem. On second thoughts I do not think the argument gets so far after all. Mr. Quinton claims to have resolved the antinomy between retributivism and utilitarianism with regard to punishment by pointing out that retribution is what punishment *means*—a logical theory—whilst utilitarianism is about the conditions under which *in general* we should punish—an ethical theory, and never the twain shall meet. This is a nice point, and certainly the air is clearer once it is made; but unfortunately logic and ethics are not so easily separable. The reason why "punishment" means what it does to people is in part that they subscribe to a certain ethical theory, and the fact that the word means what it does to them helps to keep them supporters of that ethical theory. Similarly, whilst Utilitarianism is primarily an ethical theory about the proper role of punishment in general, it is also a kind of normative-logical doctrine about what the word sensibly should mean. (All this would have to be

[1] Fewer people believe in sovereignty nowadays than believe in God. I imagine this is because the necessary combination of *de facto* and *de jure* characteristics can only be located with plausibility in a transcendental realm, and for some reason people are at present more disinclined to be transcendentalists about society than about the universe at large.

worked out in more detail with reference to the indisputably useful distinction borrowed by Quinton from Sir David Ross between asking what *kind* of action should be punished and asking on what *particular* occasion one should punish.) We really have been here before, a century ago. J. S. Mill drew the distinction underlying this article, *nur mit ein bischen anderen Worten*, when he distinguished between the sentiment (roughly equals *meaning*, in modern parlance) underlying punishment, which he admitted to be retributivist, and that which is truly moral in it.[1] And if the utilitarian does not need the distinction or is already using it, the retributivist does not either. A defender of capital punishment would I imagine tell Mr. Quinton not merely that punishment *means* inflicting something on the guilty, but that it *rightly* means this, or of you like that what is meant by this is a good thing.[2] So, alas, the advance-by-clarification claimed by Quinton turns out to be illusory. It is interesting to note that the premiss used, the separability of ethical and descriptive discourse, is one which members of this school are otherwise at present keen to criticize. Terms can have meanings in ways calculated to support certain valuations; and, in turn, re-valuations can call for changes in connotations.

Mr. Mayo's essay, "Is there a Case for the General Will?" is less an application of modern philosophical method than an attempt to go against its current and say some kind words about the General Will whilst remaining intelligible to members of that tradition. The claim that Mr. Mayo is making is that there is a kind of pragmatic justification for using the term *will* with regard to societies, as there is for using it with regard to people. What he appears to have in mind is the fact that social situations, climates of opinions, etc., do seem sometimes to call for things which none of the individuals composing them necessarily or explicitly want. Indeed, social historians and anthropologists might find it hard to abstain from this manner of speaking. I think we may agree with this claim.

The last of the essays in this group, Dr. Glanville Williams's spirited discussion of "The Controversy concerning the Word 'Law'" was first published in 1945, but in its spirit and analytical tools belongs to what may be called the Stone Age of logical positivism. It is, however, great fun, in that the author is obviously greatly thrilled with his ideas, passionately committed to them, and derives great pleasure from eliminating the heresies which he is castigating. There is about this essay none of that air of indifference, of knowing-it-all in philosophy

[1] J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*. Chap. V.

[2] Actually, Mr. Quinton strengthens his case by reducing retributivism to the minimal doctrine that guilt is the necessary but not sufficient condition of punishment, which he defends by pointing out the discretionary element in penal systems. Though technically correct, this misrepresents the spirit of retributivism, for "guilt" also entails the desirability of punishment, even if it does so with certain limiting conditions that may be vague. But in any case, even for this weak form of retributivism, my general point holds. Even this meaning of "punishment" embodies an ethical theory, and the meaning may be altered if the theory is abandoned. Consider the *hilfsbegriff* of "objective guilt" in *Darkness at Noon*, where a radically utilitarian attitude to punishment is squared with the old Quintonian meaning of the term by inventing a new sense of "guilt." As far as logic goes the trick could have been brought off as well by a new sense of "punishment."

but turning to the lower spheres of social thought from professional obligation, which hangs around some of the other papers.

When I say that the spirit of this article belongs to the first enthusiastic dawn of positivism, I mean that Dr. Williams is overjoyed by the discovery that words are—words. This is perfectly true. The rest of the argument can be easily inferred; that the word "law" means whatever we care to define it as meaning, and that in consequence the famous controversy about "the nature of law" is spurious. The fact that this magnificently clear and simple argument is made to last for about twenty pages does not mean that they are dull ones—far from it—for the author illustrates his point, or rather the (to him) surprising failure of others to see it, in a lively manner from all over the range of the controversy with which he is intimately familiar. The essence of Dr. Williams's attitude is conveyed by the quotation he uses from *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*.[1] "The question is which is to be master—that's all." Dr. Williams has no doubts at all about this. He means to be master and tell words what they will do, and he will not have *them* telling *him*.

This is all very jolly, rather like a little boy driving a steam-roller and drawing our attention to who is master. Unfortunately it is not quite as easy to be master as he thinks: and not merely because the word "law" already has a deeply engrained meaning which will not be psychologically eradicated by a new definition. If a new word, "haw," were used and then incorporated in the traditional contexts of the word "law," the difficulty would persist. Above all, the sharp separation between definition and synthetic, contingent characterization simply does not hold of language as actually used. It is at best a very illuminating model which separates what in actual use is fused, and thus brings out the elements that go into that normal use. As we actually use language, a definition *can*, however paradoxical this may seem to Dr. Williams, be contradicted by facts. For instance, if the factual evidence brought to bear against Austin by Lawrence and quoted on page 145 is valid, if municipal law would break down if every rule had to be enforced, then it may indeed follow that Austin's definition of law is invalid. It may do so by showing that Austin's definition would then cover nothing or virtually nothing, and as Austin presumably thought that he was defining a far from empty concept, this shows his definition to be mistaken.

Immensely important moral issues hinge on how we define "law." To take the extreme but plausible cases, it depends on this definition whether the violation of recognized but unenforced rules of international morality is "illegal," and whether the carrying out of an admittedly inhuman act commanded by a *de facto* authority is "legal." What view we take on ("merely"?) terminological desirability in these cases depends in part on our moral outlook, but also in part on our possibly implicit sociological or historical views, on our assessment of the context and

[1] The defects of philosophy may have something to do with the fact that there are too many philosophers whose favourite reading is Jane Austen, just as defects of economics may be connected with excessive dependence on Lewis Carroll. But the occasional quotations from *Alice* in philosophy show healthy cross-disciplinary stimulation.

consequences of either "terminological" alternative. This shows that how we choose to define "law" depends directly on our moral views and indirectly on our convictions about matters of fact—and the latter may be mistaken, and the former are open to correction. Hence to say that we can define the word "law" as we please is to misapply grossly the truth that in the end words derive their meaning from human use and that we can change it by our decision. To paraphrase Schopenhauer's admirable aphorism about human freedom, *we can make words mean whatever we will, but we cannot will what we will.*

Of course, there is an important kernel of truth in Dr. Williams's thesis. It may be that lawyers are professionally inclined to be unperceptive of the truth of nominalism, and I even suspect that logical realism may be a fiction necessary for jurisprudence. (If so, no wonder Dr. Williams gets excited by the discovery of nominalism.) But I cannot resist pointing out to Dr. Williams how easy it is to refute him by the very argument he himself employs over and over again. For Dr. Williams is entitled to use the word *definition* itself just as he pleases—for he will be master in his own verbal house—but what right has he to prescribe to others, who also like being masters, how they should use it? Note that, not being professional philosophers but lawyers, they are not obliged to be familiar with the classification of kinds of definition, nor to make their choice amongst these explicit. What they mean by "definition" and what, being masters too, they are perfectly well entitled to mean by it, is *not* "prescriptive definition" of the logical kind which clearly separates what analytically belongs to the concept from what does not, but on the contrary *definition* as that term is normally understood. In that sense "definition" means, roughly, the specification of characteristics which must be present if the defined word is to apply, *provided that* the range of application so determined corresponds more or less with the range determined by an intuitive appeal to what things are covered by the word in question (unless there are very strong reasons for disregarding that range); and with the proviso that no one of the set of characteristics is by itself absolutely essential and can be shown to be "false." In this sense, a definition can be corrected or refuted, *even if* it was introduced by the person using it with the phrase "what *I* shall mean by X is . . . ." It is still usually understood that if " . . . " is shown to determine a range quite unlike the one which the speaker had intuitively supposed X to be covering, then his definition can be said to be erroneous.

In fact Dr. Williams is better aware than I am of the issues that hinge on the definition of "law," but he persists in his conviction that a definition can do no wrong. If, per impossibile, everyone were fully aware of what his definitions entailed, Dr. Williams might be right in the sense in which he intends. But we do not know what our definitions entail, and they *are* mistaken (or "mistaken," if you wish) when they turn out to have unacceptable implications. The notion of a pure definition, unassailable by any fact, is a logician's phantasy. It is a device usable for short-term purposes only and not for long-term definition of crucial concepts.

Which sense of "definition" the legal theorists criticized by Dr. Williams were using can only be decided by looking at the logic of their argument,

rather than pre-judged by the assumption that there is only one rightful sense, and the very fact that Dr. Williams can criticize them along the lines he does shows that what they tacitly had in mind was definition in a sense other than his preferred one. But by what right is he implicitly suggesting that "definition" *must* in the nature of things have just the rather inconvenient meaning *he* attributes to it? It looks as if at least one word had been a bit of a master with him after all.

There remains the heterogenous essays not fitting in the above groups. Professor Gallie's "Liberal Morality and Socialist Morality" is the most genuinely political of all the papers. Of the essays discussed it is almost alone in being about politics and morals in a sense that would be understood by people reaching the subject from an interest in politics and not in logic or epistemology, and it is such without in any way abandoning academic standards. Professor Gallie hopes to endow contemporary academic moral philosophy with a little flesh and blood by posing the question *one morality or many*?

He distinguishes between the "monarchic" and the "polyarchic" view of morals, between the view that there is but one correct answer to moral questions and the view that there are many equally valid moral systems. I wonder whether he does not overestimate the unpopularity, even in the past, of the polyarchic view? Is it not a new name for relativism, or perhaps for what one might call non-pejorative relativism? Both Hume and the kind of moral philosophy most closely associated with contemporary philosophy are monarchic only at the formal level, holding that all moral valuations necessarily share certain logical characteristics. With regard to the normative *content* these moral systems are polyarchic and (*vide supra*) they have been much criticized for this. But Professor Gallie is almost alone in this collection in that he actually analyses current political outlooks—socialism and liberalism—as well as discussing abstractly the logic of such analysis, and he does this in a very interesting way. His paper does *not* call for the comment that the book should have been renamed "Philosophy and its lack of implications for Politics and Society."

Finally, there is Mr. Peter Laslett's article on "The Face to Face Society." Two souls seem to dwell within Cambridge University, one committed to idolatry of clarity, the other not. Mr. Laslett belongs to the latter. The world of thought in which he moves is certainly not that of the linguistic philosophers, nor is it one with which I am familiar. I have to try to reconstruct for myself why some things are obviously true or obviously problematical to Mr. Laslett, and I do not always succeed.

At one point, Mr. Laslett speaks of "us", "dating our arrival with the Renaissance." If he had pondered the total difference in language between himself and some of the contemporaneous authors he is editing he might have been less inclined rashly to imply community of outlook to the intellectuals of four centuries. For instance, whilst not sharing to the full Dr. Williams's enthusiasm for a nominalistic outlook on definitions, I really cannot make much sense of the longish passage in which Mr.

Laslett bewails the lack of a definition of the individual and seems to be implying that this lack bodes ill not merely for thought but even, in some circumstances, for societies. I really don't see what it is that he is missing. But I do wonder whether Mr. Laslett simply did not see the point of some of the essays he is editing (especially Dr. Williams's), or whether he saw it but is in total disagreement—in which case one cannot but take off one's hat to his editorial impartiality.

Mr. Laslett's central distinction is between "face to face society," in which "all activities either are, or can be, carried on by means of conversation," and territorial society in which this is not possible. This seems to me somewhat to overstress the role of *conversation*, and Mr. Laslett does not attempt to specify the inner mechanics of this process over and above reminding us that it is largely a-logical and that reacting with the whole personality is involved. This might be called the *mystique* of Mrs. Dale's Diary.

Britain is a territorial society consisting of a large number of fellow-listeners to Mrs. Dale, and Mr. Laslett's point is (not quite in these words) that the relationship of these numerous fellow-listeners to each other and to their leaders is different from the kind of relationship obtaining within Mrs. Dale's family, and that we are not sufficiently aware of this difference. He points out that any collectively active society that is too large to be a face to face society *must* find within itself a subgroup that can be face to face and that will act for it. The contention that only face to face societies are capable of interacting and reaching decisions, of "mutual response in terms of whole personalities" seems to me to verge on the tautology that only those who can interact can interact, though there may be no harm in that. The doctrine of the need of a small intimately interacting group within larger ones may be the Iron Law of Oligarchy under a new name, and Mr. Laslett may well have provided us with an interesting clue to the latter. Mr. Laslett seems to be suggesting that political theory in the past suffered through failing to consider the territorial un-Dalesque nature of modern society,[1] and he makes some general suggestions towards understanding the working of such society. But to say that they are "religious" (because they involve the "internalization of norms") does not seem to me to throw any more light on territorial society than "interaction of total personalities" does on small intimate groups. Also, I am rather doubtful about the suggestion that territorial society is less rational than intimate society. Its reactions may be less familiar, but the very fact that, being large and diffuse, it has to make use of formal methods of communications, causes a diminution of what has been aptly called "the centuple-think of rural life," which, however cosy to those at home in it, seems to me the quintessence of the non-rational. But just what Mr. Laslett wishes to do with his distinctions, just where his central conclusion lies, I have not altogether understood.

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[1] This might be a fair comment on Professor Oakeshott, as Laslett seems to be implying at one place, but seems to me inapplicable to a great deal of political theory. But Laslett discounts this by declaring, flatly, that the key notion of such philosophy as avoids this criticism, namely *representation*, is a "typical muddle." Why?

PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY

GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

The old guard still dominates the German scene. Jaspers leads with three publications, the monumental new volume of P. A. Schilpp's *Library of Living Philosophers* which appears first in German as *Karl Jaspers* (W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart); the third edition of his *Philosophie* in three volumes with an important "Postscript 1956" (Springer, Berlin); and the second edition of his *Existenzphilosophie* also with a new postscript explaining the situation in which these lectures arose (De Gruyter, Berlin). These volumes offer an opportunity for re-examining his philosophy, and are indeed used by himself for this purpose and therefore indispensable to any serious student of his thought. The Schilpp volume naturally offers the greatest amount of new material with its twenty-four contributors who have more or less succeeded in discussing a philosophy of pure reflexion without specific doctrines. They allow Jaspers to clarify his thought, especially concerning the problems of existential communication (in reply to Fritz Kaufmann's elaborate and penetrating defence of a more general theory), of psychology, history and politics. From Jaspers's introductory "Philosophical Autobiography" new facts emerge: his constant heroic struggle with his recurrent illness, the fixing of his deportation for April 14, 1945, and his liberation by the Americans arriving on April 1st; Rickert's hostility, and the depressing conditions in which his "Philosophical Logic," destined to remain a torso, arose. Since it is impossible to discuss all contributions (among which Walter Kaufmann's blunt rejection of Jaspers's "Nietzsche" is unusual), I shall concentrate on the new light these volumes shed on the origin of Existentialism. Jaspers called his masterpiece *Philosophie*. The title says too little and claims too much. Why did he not call it *Existenzphilosophie*? The answer is that it was never intended as such. It grew out of lectures on *Grundriss der Philosophischen Weltanschauung* (1927). This fact, not mentioned by Jaspers, is most revealing for the transition from a *Psychology of Worldviews* to the *Outlines of the Philosophical Worldview*, as well as for the *Philosophie* itself. For this is exactly what the book is, an original ambitious enterprise to create, in the wake of Hegel, a system embracing the World, Man and God, on the basis of Kierkegaard's concept of "possible existence." It therefore became a "system of philosophizing" based on acts of transcending. It says very little about the world and God; its value lies in its second volume on *Existenzerhellung*. It could have been called a philosophy of communication for it makes truth dependent on communication.

In 1937 Jaspers was asked to lecture on *Existenzphilosophie* at Frankfurt and accepted for his own philosophy this term introduced by the present reviewer for describing a new approach which found different expressions in Jaspers and Heidegger. Jaspers acknowledges this fact, and is right in adding that the movement itself arose almost anonymously, namely, from two sources, the precarious position of the human person in the modern mass society, and from the Kierkegaard-renaissance. *Heidegger's* influence is largely based on his involuntary participation in this movement and on an excellent philosophical training which Jaspers lacks. The question: *Was ist das—Die Philosophie?* (Neske, Pfullingen) is answered by him in a narrow Greek-European manner by going back in a romantic vein to the alleged original sense of the word *φιλοσοφία* which he believes to find in Heraclitus. By the ingenious trick of substituting *to sophon* for *sophia* and interpreting it as *das*

Sein des Seienden he is able to make interesting historical remarks and to give a definition of philosophy which amounts to saying that *his* philosophy is *the* philosophy. It may, however, be that the formulation of the question is already at fault. Heidegger publishes simultaneously a series of lectures (1955–56) and a single lecture under the title, *Der Satz des Grundes* (Neske, Pfullingen). The detailed analysis of Leibniz' principle of sufficient reason is valuable, but its second interpretation, in the new key of Heideggerian ontology, as a proposition leading into being as being, i.e. as reason, will hardly recommend itself to our readers. In the end, we are again back at Heraclitus's alleged identification of being and reason. Ludwig Binswanger's *Der Mensch in der Psychiatrie* (Neske, Pfullingen) is interesting, first because it confirms Heidegger's, the existentialist's, influence on psychiatry, and secondly because this leading *Daseinsanalytiker* combines Heidegger's conception of man as a being-within-the-world with sharp observation and phenomenological description. He is right in describing different forms of being-within-the-world in their normal and abnormal forms, but he is wrong in accepting Heidegger's categories as *a priori*. I have reason to assume that my two books, *Existenzphilosophie, Lebendig oder Tot?* (2nd ed., Kohlhammer, Stuttgart) and *Jenseits des Existentialismus* (Kohlhammer) are not without influence on the current re-assessment of existentialist thought in Germany. An incisive contribution to the critique of phenomenological philosophy from the standpoint of the neo-Kantian Nelson School is made in J. Kraft's *Von Husserl zu Heidegger* (2nd ed., Verlag Öffentliches Leben).

The late Peter Wust's letters *Briefe an Freunde*, and *Unterwegs zur Heimat*, both edited by W. Vernekohl (Regensberg, Münster), are of great personal and general interest. Especially the letters to Charles du Bos and the paper "Pariser Rechenschaft" in the second volume reveal not only the true meaning of existential communication as a *communio animarum*, but also the inner circle of Paris in the late 'twenties and 'thirties. The remarkable fact emerges that Wust, the "lonely servant of the Spirit," who took part in the decisive battle for the soul of Europe, felt isolated in the "Catholique Ghetto" of the Rhineland but at home in the circle of the *Renouveau Catholique* at Paris, i.e. of Charles Du Bos, Maritain, Marcel, the Baruzis, etc. In the first volume the description of Edith Stein's taking the veil as a Carmelite nun is vivid, but would have been different if the author had known that her way did not lead "From Husserl to Carmel," but to Auschwitz. Graf Paul Yorck von Wartenburg's *Bewusstseinsstellung und Geschichte*, edited by I. Fetscher (Niemeyer, Tübingen), a fragment from his literary remains, is a "philosophical history of philosophy" analysing the psychological attitudes (*Bewusstseinsstellungen*) underlying Greek, Medieval and Modern Philosophies from a Protestant point of view. Graf Yorck influenced his friend Dilthey, and the book is therefore of special value to students of Dilthey's thought.

The history of philosophy is enriched by the following contributions: first, by Nicolai Hartmann's *Kleinere Schriften*, Bd. II (De Gruyter, Berlin), a collection of his papers referring to the history of philosophy, especially to Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz and Hegel. Here the history of philosophy is conceived as a history of recurrent problems, in which the real "insights" of the great philosophers have to be rediscovered. Hartmann accepts Plato's "insight," namely, that we are able to find in our intellect the principles of being, and this enables him to shed light on the history of rationalism. It is difficult to understand why these important papers are edited without introduction and index. Karl Reinhardt's *Poseidonios von Apameia, der Rhodier genannt* (J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart) deserves the special attention of all Greats' Students. A reprint of his newest contribution to the *Real-Enzyklopädie*, it represents

an invaluable most detailed survey of the whole Poseidonios literature and of the present state of our knowledge by the leading authority on the subject. It is at the same time a restatement of his own interpretation in reply to critics of his previous publications. R. Harder's *Plotins Schriften*, Bd. I., i.e. I a. Text and Translation. Ib. Commentary and Notes (F. Meiner, Hamburg) will be an indispensable new tool to all students of Plotinus. It is a thoroughly revised edition, now based on Henry's and Schwyzer's text which is reprinted with minor alterations, supplemented by a volume of explanatory notes. The value of this work lies in numerous points of detailed philological exegesis which cannot be discussed here. Only one point of some consequence can be mentioned. This translation differs from all others by transposing Porphyrius' *Vita Plotini* from the beginning to the end and by replacing his systematic order by an alleged historical order derived from the same *Vita*. Porphyrius, however, concerning the twenty-one treatises printed in this volume merely reports that they were written when he arrived at Rome. The intention of giving the precise historical sequence is foreign to him and indeed to all Greco-Roman writers. The so-called "historical order" is a prejudice arising with Kirchhoff's edition (1856), unknown to previous scholars (such as Ritter, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Creuzer), and rejected by Zeller (Vol. III, 2, 4th ed., p. 526). Nevertheless, the prejudice prevails to-day because it would be wonderful if it proved true. No "proof" is given for these first twenty-one items to which Plotinus himself had given no titles, though it would be decisive for the interpretation of the first period of his thought. W. Theiler's scholarly emended and annotated edition and excellent translation of Marcus Aurelius' *Wege zu sich selbst* (Artemis, Zürich) deserves special attention. The valuable introduction stresses the Stoic sources and especially Poseidonios's influence. *Leibniz als Historiker* by W. Conze, *Leibniz' Erkenntnislehre* by R. Zocher, and *Leibniz und China* by R. F. Merkel form the concluding volumes of the *Festschrift: Leibniz zu seinem* 300. *Geburtstag* (De Gruyter, Berlin). Conze attempts to show against Dilthey that Leibniz was able to accommodate History in his system, and that he postulated a logic of probability as a basis of its contingent truths. Zocher points to three different foundations of his epistemology, i.e. in the autonomy of the mind, in the monad, and in God's mind. Merkel writes a well-documented essay on Leibniz, Chinese studies and plans. J. G. Hamann was an original but most obscure writer. The new annotated edition of his major works is therefore most welcome. So far two volumes, edited by F. Blanke and L. Schreiner, have appeared: *Johann Georg Hamanns Hauptschriften erklärt:* Bd. I, *Die Hamann-Forschung*, and Bd. VII, *Golgatha and Scheblimini* (Bertelsmann, Gütersloh). The first volume is useful because of its comprehensive bibliography and history of the Hamann-interpretation. The second volume contains a criticism of Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* and of the philosophy and theology of the enlightenment. The notes succeed in eliminating the allusiveness of Hamann's style; the running commentary of the interpretation is so elaborate that it is by far longer than the text. It will be useful to the student if he remembers that Hamann's elusiveness cannot be completely eliminated and that alternative interpretations are possible.

The *Kantstudien* have entered a period of great activity; Vol. 49, No. 1 is dedicated to Professor H. J. Paton on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, and Vol. 48, No. 2 in the same manner to Professor H. Heimsoeth, whose substantial *Studien zur Philosphie Kants* are published in a separate volume (Kölner Universitäts-Verlag). They are representative of an *ontological* interpretation of Kant's philosophy, now fashionable in West Germany, and succeed in illuminating what was *old* in Kant, but neglect what was *new* and

fruitful for the interpretation of modern science. The same tendency prevails in Professor G. Martin's *Klassische Ontologie der Zahl* (same publisher) which discusses the theories of number from Pythagoras to Husserl. The book is of importance for the history of the problem; it is to be hoped that the two succeeding volumes will convince the sceptics that an ontology of number is still possible.

The overproduction of books and the limited space at our disposal unfortunately make it impossible to do more than mention the following titles: O. Blaha, *Logische Wirklichkeisstruktur und personaler Seinsgrund* (Stiasny, Graz), who attempts to reveal the logical structure of reality as based on personal being; Franz Schmidt's *Ordnungslehre* (E. Reinhardt, München), an outline of an ontological theory of order, including logical, prelogical and a-logical order. O. Feyerabend's *Das Organologische Weltbild* (2nd ed., Niemeyer, Tübingen) is based on the assumption that organic forms are the expression of an immaterial spiritual principle. W. Weilgart asks *Was ist normal im Schatten der Atombombe?* (Gerold, Wien) and answers that in the atom age the inhibited neurotic is less harmful than the aggressive normal man. W. Ehrlich's *Ethik* (Niemeyer, Tübingen) is not an ethics, but rather a metaphysics of ethics; his theme is the "moral ontological structure of man" (*die ethische Wesensverfassung des Menschen*). He believes in cosmic sin (*Weltschuld*) as opposed to original sin, and his aim is to liberate man from this alleged sin. But is the term *Weltschuld* meaningful? Or does it cover an unconscious flight from responsibility and an attempt to saddle the world with exclusively human shortcomings?

Oxford. F. H. Heinemann.

NEW BOOKS

Ethical Judgment: The Use of Science in Ethics. By ABRAHAM EDEL. (The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1955. Pp. 348. Price $5.).

This book is principally concerned with the problem of ethical relativity and seeks to show how such relativity may be diminished. It is an interesting and perhaps important book, worked out on modern lines, but far too prolix and often bedevilled by logical confusions.

Mr. Edel's thesis appears to be roughly this (i) Many ethical theories in the past have openly proclaimed the inevitability of morals being relative to persons or cultures—and even those theories, intuitionist and utilitarian alike, which seek by dubious means to combat this relativism, themselves unwittingly embody an element of relativity, or, as Mr. Edel prefers to call it, indeterminacy; (ii) a study of biology, psychology and other social sciences can show us how to establish certain basic values for the orientation of conduct and thus eliminate, or nearly eliminate, this indeterminacy in ethics.

The second part of this thesis obviously requires clarification, for it gives the impression that someone is trying to conjure an "ought" out of an "is"; and in fact we frequently feel throughout Mr. Edel's long and painstaking analyses—psychological, biological, anthropological, historical and so on—that he does not altogether escape falling into this error.

For example: early in his book he asks "Is ethical relativity the verdict of science?" (p. 15). Now this seems to me an improper question. For surely the only "verdict" that science or the sciences can give must be of this kind: the consequences of doing A, B and C are so-and-so; most men do (don't) desire these consequences, or would (would not) desire these consequences if they stopped to think about them; therefore do (don't do) A, B and C. Or we might take another model: scientific investigation of one kind or another has shown that mankind as a whole "really" seeks to realize certain basic aims, aims which are often incompatible with certain common moral attitudes and behaviour patterns; therefore mankind ought to behave in manner X and avoid behaving in manner Y, if these basic aims are to be realized. It seems to me that only along these or similar lines can the social sciences be said to have relevance to the solution of moral problems and to the diminishing of relativity in moral rules. For it is sufficiently clear that science as such, in the handing down of "verdicts," operates purely in the sphere of what Kant called the hypothetical imperative. A scientist, in whatever branch of science he may specialize, is only capable of saying "*if* you want such and such, then you ought to do so-and-so"—and he can never say, *qua* scientist and with logical propriety, "you ought to value this (e.g. life or happiness or the performance of duty) absolutely and for its own sake."

But nor for that matter, as Mr. Edel is well aware, can a moral philosopher cast his "ought" sentences in this absolutist mould although, as we all know, many moral philosophers have believed they could. Basic principles or ultimate ends in morals are matters, not for some mysterious intuitive perception, but for agreement; and the only way we can properly persuade others to accept our own moral principles or ends—e.g. "You ought not to cause unnecessary suffering" or "Knowledge is a good"—is to show them, work out for them, the consequences of denying the validity of these principles or ends and then to see if they find such consequences acceptable, i.e. coherent with other principles or ends they do accept. When this is done—and particularly if it is done in conjunction with a variety of scientific findings as set forth in

Mr. Edel's book—it is more than likely that we shall find a large measure of ethical agreement among people we regard as rational—i.e. among those who are prepared to argue consistently and accept the conclusions logically derived from a set of agreed premisses. But there is of course no cast-iron guarantee that some value which we regard as fundamental will be accepted as fundamental, or even accepted at all, by everyone else—as was borne out by the number and enthusiasm of Hitler's followers. However, our present discussions of these ethical problems are greatly assisted by the work of the modern ethical analysts; for such discussions are compact of terms like "duty," "good," "bad," "virtue" and so forth and unless we are clear about the logical behaviour of such concepts we shall not be clear what ethical principles we are subscribing to or what moral ends we are making our own.

So far as I can judge, Mr. Edel accepts something like this, although designedly he does not say much about the logical analysis of ethical concepts. Yet from time to time he deliberately makes statements which are curiously inconsistent with the view I have just outlined. A social scientist, he tells us, is entitled to say that "slums are an *evil*" (p. 243, my italics), and not just "if you don't like frustration, misery, delinquency, crime, etc., then you should abolish slums." Nor is this inconsistency entirely eliminated by Edel's referring us back, in a footnote, to his original definition of "evil" as "the object of aversion"—a definition which is not "neutral," as he claims, but happens to be the *ex parte* naturalistic definition offered by Hobbes. Indeed, amongst other reasons for protesting against *unqualified* value-judgments being made by social scientists, is the fact that the value or disvalue concepts they use are susceptible of different interpretations—as they would quickly learn if they scanned some pages from Hobbes, Hume and Stevenson and made a comparison. Again, Mr. Edel does not always seem to be aware of the difference, the very great difference, between saying "X is a good for (i.e. valued by) all or most people" and "X is a good (i.e. valuable in and for itself)." He seems to shift from one to the other and back again, although the transition is often masked by a device called a "phase rule." Briefly, a phase rule is another name for a "Break-only-with-regret rule"—e.g. "Killing *as such* is wrong, but it may be your duty to kill on a specific occasion." We may regard this sort of rule, Edel says, as "referring not directly to the *results* of moral calculation of a situation but to the *process* of reaching such results. Hence the rule is what we may call a *phase rule* or states an *operational universal* or rule of reckoning. What it says is that in every situation in which a moral reckoning is taking place, the killing aspect is to be reckoned as negative (wrong). This is a universal statement." (p. 47.) This phase rule seems a tricky device, and needs far more elucidation than Edel gives it. For it allows him to state, without the sort of qualification that seems called for, that "life is a good" (p. 130), that "drive expression in general is a good" (p. 141) and to pass from "everyone wants to be healthy" to "the minimal conclusion that health is not an evil" and the probable conclusion that "it is an actual good" (p. 144).

The final part of Mr. Edel's book, entitled *Towards a Common Ethic*, deals with what he calls the concept of the Valuational Base which is to take up within itself, so to speak, all the findings of the previous chapters and thus provide a firm basis for morality, reducing indeterminacy to a minimum. He explains it as follows:

> The concept of the valuational base is intended to point to the crystallization of the determinate elements we have found, and to suggest that these may play a fundamental role in evaluative processes. It is a base

> because it acts as a standpoint for evaluation, providing moorings to which a morality may be fastened, and sailing-charts for its general course. It is valuational because it embodies major decisions of policy supported by an interlocking structure of human knowledge and human striving. It is not simply identical with basic value premises widely held or pervasive attitudes, since even a strong and widespread value inclination may be distorting human needs and be shot through with false assumptions about the world. . . . The constituents of the valuational base will clearly represent a fusion of universal and local elements. The universal are the fundamental human needs, the perennial aspirations and strivings, and the discovered high values that are deeply grounded in these needs and aspirations. . . . The local elements will be the central problems of the age including its central necessary conditions and special contingent elements (not necessarily values themselves) which may press heavily upon men's pursuit of values in the given age. (p. 297.)

The account that follows is somewhat diffuse, but it certainly has a point. And if we are trying to agree on, or to evaluate, some system of morals, we could do worse than turn our attention first to a valuational base of the kind outlined by Mr. Edel.

J. HARTLAND-SWANN.

Physics and Philosophy. The First Grosseteste Memorial Lecture. By LORD CHERWELL, C.H., F.R.S. (London: Oxford University Press, Cumberlege. 1955. Pp. 21. Price 2s 6d.)

The Analysis of Matter. By BERTRAND RUSSELL. Reprint. (London: Allen and Unwin. 1954. Price 25s.)

Lord Cherwell's main point is not new, but it still needs to be stressed. The modern physicist can no longer use the conceptual bases of his predecessor—three dimensional space, one dimensional time, indestructible material particles, universal causation. He has to accept "an appallingly complicated image consisting of entities with self-contradictory properties, sometimes waves, sometimes particles, pictured in non-Euclidean space subject to all sorts of pulls and pushes transmitted through a void" (17). And while (by neglecting all kinds of difficulties) the old physicist could think of his mechanical model of the world as very like what the world itself must be, the new physicist has to content himself with the thought that his model serves as a first-rate calculating machine. Or to take Lord Cherwell's analogy, it enables him to make a map of certain characteristics of the "external universe" (5). But he cannot claim that his map resembles the universe it pictures any more than a verbal description of a set of happenings resembles the happenings. And what troubles Lord Cherwell is that he cannot be content with this. The old imaginative picture of a mechanical universe is destroyed, without any satisfactory new one being provided. The remedy is looked for in closer relations between physics and philosophy. We need a "metaphysical check-up" of our concepts, and this involves the co-operation of philosophers and scientists. I do not know whether he hopes that this co-operation would result in a more satisfying imaginative picture of the physical world. It is the kind of thing some philosophers were trying to provide thirty years ago, but none of the attempts succeeded in starting a nursery. Perhaps the popularity of the view that scientific concepts have meaning only within the frame of the calculations they serve to guide, is due to the feeling that an imaginative picture is beyond our powers at the present time. However this may be, it is

useful to have the reprint of Bertrand Russell's *Analysis of Matter*, first published in 1927, as a reminder that the problems still exist. This book falls into three parts, (i) a logical exposition of the state of physics in the 1920's, (ii) an epistemological discussion of perception in the light of physics, and (iii) an ontological account of what can be said about the world if physics is true. The second part seems to me to be more successful, as an exposition, than the rest: the first part requires for its understanding far more mathematical equipment than Russell provides, and the third part is exceedingly abstract. The book contains a noteworthy exposition of Russell's doctrine of neutral monism.

L. J. RUSSELL.

The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence. Edited by H. G. ALEXANDER. (Manchester: University Press. 1956. Pp. lvi, 200. Price 16s.)

It is good to have these letters in a modern edition. The discussion with Clarke (with Newton in the background) about space, time and motion, atoms, forces, miracles, etc., began with a brief letter from Leibniz to the Princess of Wales, whose guide in philosophy he had been before she left Hanover for England; and there were in all five letters from Leibniz and five replies from Clarke, the Princess acting as intermediary, until Leibniz's death put a stop to the proceedings. It was a contest for the favour of the Princess, but with an eye to a wider public.

In the original edition of 1717, prepared by Clarke, English and French were on opposite pages, Leibniz's papers being translated into English by Clarke and Clarke's replies translated into French by de la Roche. Mr. Alexander prints the English version. In his Introduction he has given the main information a reader needs, adding in appendices relevant passages from Newton's *Principia* and *Optics*, and from Leibniz's other correspondence.

In one sense the correspondence is futile and irritating. The disputants are too far apart. For Leibniz there could not be in the universe a situation without a sufficient reason why every feature in it was so and not otherwise. Thus you could not have two particles exactly alike, for they would have different positions without any possible reason. The principle ruled out absolute space and time indifferent to their contents, and completely similar atoms, as conceived by Newton. Clarke was willing to admit that God had a reason for everything he created, but he could not see why this reason should not in certain cases be found simply in God's decision. This made it possible for him to accept space, time and atoms as conceived by Newton. On this major difference, there is no argument: each reiterates his position. Leibniz tries another way: if you start by supposing that there are two situations between which there is no distinguishable difference in quality, you will find that they are not really two but one. Clarke simply denies this and Leibniz simply reiterates it: there is again no discussion. In so far as Leibniz defends it he connects it with the principle of sufficient reason. And so with most of the major points in dispute. Leibniz, who had held his views for many years, found it easier to express them and develop their consequences than to argue in favour of them, while for Clarke they were so novel and paradoxical that he could only deny them.

Only occasionally is a point made which opens up the situation and calls for further analysis: for example, Clarke's point that the quantitative aspect of space and time cannot be accounted for on the theory that space and time are merely orders of phenomena, or his argument that the phenomena of rotation are consistent only with an absolute space. Thus the interest in the

papers lies mainly in the way in which diametrically opposed views are laid alongside each other, and in the diversity of the topics which emerge. I need say nothing about these topics here: Professor Broad has given an account of them which could hardly be bettered.[1]

Mr. Alexander has provided an index of names, and it is perhaps wanting too much to wish that he had given an analytic index of subjects. We should certainly be grateful to him for what he has given.

L. J. Russell.

Heraclitus: the Cosmic Fragments. Edited with an Introduction and Commentary by G. S. Kirk. (Cambridge University Press, 1954. Pp. xvi + 424. Price 50s.)

Mr. Kirk's edition is a remarkable example of great learning easily handled and of sound judgment based upon it, and, exercised upon Heraclitus, the quality of his judgment stands out the more because of the wild and speculative treatment to which that author has all too frequently been subjected. Nor is it that Mr. Kirk has been cautiously unoriginal; he has displayed an independent judgment upon every point that has come within his purview, and the final picture of Heraclitus which he presents is new in important respects.

He divides the fragments into two classes, the cosmic and the anthropocentric, of which he deals directly only with the former, though many of the latter are discussed incidentally as well. His main principle of exposition is to base himself first and foremost on direct quotations from Heraclitus, taking the utmost care to prune away all interpretations from later antiquity which do not seem to be soundly based on direct evidence. Of the cosmic fragments accepted by Diels as genuine he rejects twelve (4, 8, 37, 49a, 66, 73, 76, 89, 106, 112, 113 and 137), but nothing of philosophical importance is lost thereby. The reasons for an almost exclusive emphasis on direct quotations are expounded in the introduction, where the ancient evidence is classified and discussed under the following headings: Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus and the doxographical tradition, and other sources (i.e. the Hippocratic *De Victu* and the pseudo-Heraclitean *Letters*). Mr. Kirk argues that misleading developments of interpretation go back as far as Plato and were extended by Aristotle and Theophrastus, and that their influence, direct or indirect, on later antiquity was such that in general we can confidently ascribe independent value to what later authors say only when they quote Heraclitus' own words. Neither the *De Victu* (later than the middle of the fourth century, and probably evincing Peripatetic influences) nor the *Letters* can give much help. On the general caution with which the tradition is to be treated, and on the stamp of the Academy and early Peripatos which it bears upon it, Mr. Kirk avowedly owes much to Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy*.

The main consequence of following out this programme is the denial to Heraclitus of the celebrated doctrine of the flux, and the derivation of its ascription to him from certain passages in Plato (*Cra.* 402A, 440B-C, *Tht.* 152D-E, 160D, 179D-180A) which receive no support from the actual fragments, and which by themselves have no evidential value when once it is seen how easily a theory of flux could be developed out of *frr.* 12 and 91, which are in fact concerned to stress the different *motif* of the law of regularity and measure in all change (pp. 14–19 and 366–84; an elaborate stemma of the derivation of the ascription of the flux theory is to be found on p. 375). A sketch of Mr.

[1] *Ethics and the History of Philosophy*, pp. 168–91.

Kirk's views on this point is to be found in his article, "Natural Change in Heraclitus" (*Mind*, 60 (1951), pp. 35 ff.); they are to my mind completely convincing. The core of Heraclitus' teaching is thus found in the various ramifications of his doctrine of the Logos ("formula of things," "the organized way in which all things work" (p. 39)), i.e. in the multifarious variations on the theme of the unity of opposites and the tension within that unity which is its counterpart. The fragments published are in fact arranged in twelve groups largely in accordance with these variations.

Mr. Kirk rightly refuses to ascribe to Heraclitus the later (Stoic) doctrine of *ecpyrosis* (pp. 307–38); he discusses at some length the origins of this ascription in Theophrastus and perhaps, behind him, in Aristotle (*Cael.* 279 b, 12 ff.). Heraclitus' actual theory of physical change and the balance it maintained was, in fact, incompatible with any such view. The only topics on which Mr. Kirk thinks the post-Aristotelian tradition of value are Theophrastus' account of his astronomy (p. 270), the doctrines of a thirty-year generation and of a great year, and Sextus Empiricus' account of the soul's contact with the outside world (pp. 270, 295). He discusses at length Heraclitus' views on exhalations, concluding that he believed in one only, the theory of two being Aristotle's (pp. 270 ff.).

Mr. Kirk argues that what Heraclitus composed was a collection of aphorisms, whether written down by himself or by others, and wisely makes no attempt to reconstruct their original order. On the linguistic and stylistic side, he realizes his importance as one of the earliest, if not the very earliest, of the Greek prose writers of whom substantial fragments have survived, and takes pains to trace the physiognomy of his style. In interpreting his language he makes ample use of Homer, Herodotus and the tragedians, and also of the results of comparative philology. There are, moreover, at various points illuminating references to other of the Presocratic philosophers.

On *fr.* 94 ("The sun will not overstep his measures") one might refer to the discussion in Hans Kelsen, *Society and Nature*, of the intermingling of social conceptions with those of natural science (esp. pp. 237 ff., on Heraclitus). The observations on *fr.* 6 (pp. 276–7) lead one to suspect that there must have been some confusion in the ancient tradition between *skaphē* and *skaphos*.

Mr. Kirk's volume is one of which the world of scholarship may well be proud.

D. A. Rees.

The Philosophy of Plato. By R. C. Lodge (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1956. Price 28s.)

This book aims to give an account of the thought of Plato and his predecessors in ethics, aesthetics, religion, and education. Its main thesis is that it is almost exclusively to the *Laws* that we must look to find what is Plato's original thought in these fields. The thesis rests on a number of very questionable assumptions. In the first place, Professor Lodge "accepts," substantially, the view that all the Socratic dialogues (defined as "the Dialogues in which Socrates is presented as the chief speaker") express Socratic rather than Platonic thought. This is not, he thinks, a view which demands any detailed argument; "practically all scholars" consider that in these dialogues we have "not opinions of Plato, but Socrates, somewhat glamorized" (he adapts here Plato's remarks in *Epistle* ii. 314c). But this is quite obviously not the case. Most scholars would consider these dialogues Socratic only in a sense which still permits a very free development of Plato's *own* views; they certainly

do not take *Epistle* ii. 314c in a sense which makes it "authoritative" on this question, and if they do make use of the *Epistles* they refer rather to *Ep.* vii, 326a–b, where a principal thesis of the *Republic* is presented as a conclusion reached by Plato himself from his *own* experience. But let us now see how Lodge disposes of the non-Socratic dialogues. Since the *Parmenides* is, apparently, Socratic, we are left with the *Politicus*, *Sophistes*, *Timaeus*, and *Laws*. It is assumed that, in the *Timaeus*, Timaeus expresses his own, Pythagorean, views. The *Politicus*, an "almost non-Socratic dialogue," about which "doubt is felt" among scholars as to whether its views are "genuinely 'Eleatic' or Platonic," is not discussed, despite its obvious relevance to the main thesis. The *Sophistes*, about which similar "doubt is felt," drops out, presumably because of Lodge's view that "the purely logical aspects" of Plato's philosophy are best left "to further investigation." It would appear that a discussion of Plato's metaphysical views is similarly to be postponed, though we do find on the penultimate page of the book a statement of Lodge's own interpretation of the theory of Forms, which shows that he follows Natorp and Stewart in a Kantian type of interpretation ("There is no evidence . . . that Plato believes in the actuality of such transcendent ideas." His "ideas" are to be understood "methodologically"). The *Laws* remain. And Lodge's final assumption is that in this work Plato has at last passed beyond the uncompromising idealism of Socrates and is expressing views which may truly be called his own.

The greater part of the book is devoted to the thought of Plato's predecessors, as Lodge imagines that Plato himself viewed it. His method is to restrict his account almost exclusively to what he thinks can be substantiated by reference to the dialogues. The result is a very general picture of the "levels" of thought reached by the different schools, defined in relation to the Socratic "principle of ideality" (the Form of the Good, in the *Republic*). Both method and result may be illustrated by the account of the Pythagoreans. Plato mentions them only twice in the dialogues, and Lodge has to rely largely on *Republic*, 530c–531c. By a free elaboration of this, and by using principally three other passages (*Rep.* 510b ff.; 533b ff.; *Tim.* 53b ff: these are taken to be Pythagorean in reference) he builds up his picture. The Pythagoreans represent the stage of "mathematical empiricism," taking the data of their techniques "*holus-bolus* from ordinary commercial and farming experience," priding themselves that all their "laws" can be "verified empirically," and never venturing to "elaborate their conceptual patterns" beyond a point where "the problems seem unfamiliar and biosocially, perhaps, of no obvious and immediate usefulness"; they "stick close to the humanist attitude," to "the traditions resting, not upon reason, but upon factually authoritative usages." There is much more in the same vein, a mixture of exaggeration, misinterpretation, and imprecision. There is a similar treatment of the other schools of thought. Plato's originality is that he "institutionalizes the Socratic vision." Where Socrates is uncompromising and "a little defiant in relation to the *status quo*," Plato can see "positive value" in "the thoroughgoing acceptance of a *status quo* which is not 'ideal,' but admittedly 'second-best.' " He is an aristocrat with sympathy to all classes, while Socrates is an artisan's son with "a slight tendency to look down on the class from which he has arisen." From this point of view Lodge attempts to indicate, from the *Laws*, Plato's "advance" in ethics, aesthetics, religion, and education. There are the same faults here as in the account of previous thought. And Lodge's remarks often appear to be either irrelevant to the subject or very wide of the mark in assessing the significance of what Plato says. Thus, throughout the chapter on aesthetics, we look vainly for any indication of Plato's "theory," only to find, two pages from the end of it, that Plato's new conception of art is that he now

views the object of art as the "enhancing" of "the life of model citizenship," this life being "itself the final art-product." In the chapter on "philosophy of religion," where we might reasonably expect a full discussion of the theoretical arguments of the theology of *Laws. X*, we find that Plato's "distinctive contribution" is no "intellectual's substitute for religion," but the conception of "religion itself" or "model-city religion," whereby "everyone lives in an atmosphere which you can only pronounce permeated with religious feeling."

This is a pitifully inadequate account of Plato's philosophy. No one doubts Professor Lodge's wide literal knowledge of the Platonic text. But this book raises grave doubts about his ability to interpret it. NORMAN GULLEY.

Plato's Philosophy of Mathematics. By A. WEDBERG. Stockholm (Almquist and Wiksell). 1955. Pp. 154.

It is a relief to come upon a book treating of a central and much disputed question of Plato's philosophy in a manner that is clear, beautifully organized and concise. Wedberg wastes no words and uses no jargon, and since he adds to these virtues a scholarly caution, his short book has a value out of all proportion to its size. He writes as a philosopher and mathematician rather than a *philolog*, but is meticulously careful to distinguish between what Plato expressly says and what may seem to a modern thinker a necessary inference from what he says. At the same time, his ability to write as a philosopher allows him to state clearly and usefully the difference between Plato's view of mathematics and our own. (See especially the opening Chapter IV, on the philosophy of geometry.)

His problem is the familiar one of the existence in Plato's philosophy of a class of "mathematical objects" intermediate between Ideas and sensible particulars, sharing with the Ideas the attributes of eternal existence and changelessness and with particulars the attribute of plurality; and he argues against Cherniss and others that there is clear evidence in the dialogues themselves that Plato did, as Aristotle asserts, posit such an intermediate class. More precisely, he argues that the dialogues contain (*a*) explicit statements of a belief in arithmetical intermediates, (*b*) propositions which entail the existence of mathematical intermediates, geometrical as well as arithmetical. With characteristic modesty, he attributes no more than "rather high probability" to his conclusion from these facts that Plato "sometime, somehow" arrived at the assumption of mathematical intermediates of both kinds.

The book is arranged in five chapters. After a statement of the problem, they contain short expositions of the general nature of Plato's mathematics, the Theory of Ideas, Plato's philosophy of geometry and his philosophy of arithmetic. They are followed by four appendices, in which Aristotle's analyses of Plato's philosophy of geometry and arithmetic are confronted with the evidence of the dialogues on the same topics. Apart from its bearing on the immediate question, each chapter is invaluable as a brief, clear statement of its subject. In particular, the description of the Theory of Ideas in Chapter III could hardly be bettered in its compass (under twenty pages) and in lucidity and good sense has the advantage over some lengthier expositions by classical scholars.

In connexion with this chapter I should like to raise a point of general interest, without intending any adverse criticism of the author. He states at the beginning that whereas the problem involved was for Plato both logical and metaphysical, he intends his survey to cover only Plato's solution of the logical problem. This, because "we can now perhaps distinguish, better than

Plato could, the simple logical kernel of the problem from associated metaphysical questions," can, he thinks, be legitimately separated from the metaphysical side. Later in the chapter he raises the logical difficulty involved in Plato's belief that an Idea has itself the attribute for which it stands. The Idea of Y-ness is itself Y, and this was thought by Aristotle to condemn Plato's theory to an infinite regress (the "third man" argument), an objection which Plato himself mentions in the *Parmenides* but does not seem to have regarded as fatal. Wedberg agrees with modern logicians in regarding Aristotle's criticism as final. It is, however, arguable that this criticism arises from neglect of the metaphysical side of the Theory of Ideas which to Plato was so essential and to contemporary philosophers is so contemptible. The Idea which has its own quality to perfection exists according to the theory on an entirely different plane from the particulars: the eternal and intelligible plane as opposed to the temporal and sensible. Wedberg notes that it is Aristotle who "shows that he knew exactly how the infinite regress arises, viz, from thinking of the general Idea as a particular partaking of that Idea." This is significant, for Aristotle was the first who found it impossible to believe in the two-world metaphysics by which Platonism stands or falls, and it is to such critics that the objection is damning. Plato did not regard the Idea as a particular partaking of itself. It is perhaps relevant that although the Beautiful itself is beautiful, its beauty is not visible as is that of a beautiful particular which shares in it. Of course Aristotle, as Wedberg says, "definitely advances the logical analysis of universal concepts," but at the cost of throwing over what was to Plato himself the most valuable part of the Theory of Ideas. "Universal concept" is by no means an adequate description of a Platonic Idea. Elsewhere, Aristotle complains of the difficulty of establishing any connexion at all between Ideas and particulars. Here, owing to the metaphysical core of Plato's doctrine, he is on surer ground. But both criticisms can hardly be equally valid.

I will say no more except that the book is a serious and well-reasoned challenge to those who reject Aristotle's interpretation of Plato's philosophy of mathematics. All interested in Plato should read it. They will find the task short, pleasant and stimulating. Occasional slight traces of non-English idiom do no more than bring home the remarkable achievement of the author in writing with such lucidity in a foreign tongue. Misprints are unimportant and only remind us similarly of the credit due to his Swedish publishers.

W. K. C. Guthrie.

Kant's Metaphysics and Theory of Science. By Gottfried Martin. Translated from the German by P. G. Lucas. (Manchester University Press. 1955. Pp. viii + 218. Price 21s.)

This translation from the German of Professor Martin's *Immanuel Kant, Ontologie and Wissenschaftstheorie* will be welcomed by all those who look to Kant for something more than a theory of science, for, as Professor Martin writes in the Preface, *The Critique of Pure Reason* "is certainly a theory of physical science . . . a theory of experience," but it is "to the same degree at least an ontology." This will surprise, indeed shock, many Kantian scholars and the phrase "to the same degree" is certainly a bold one in view of Kant's exiguous statements about the "thing-in-itself" compared with his extensive and laboured attempts to validate Newtonian physics, but the author boldly maintains his thesis in the face of other interpretations, and with a wealth of

scholarship drawn from Greek, Medieval and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources, demonstrates, at the very least, that those who wish to understand Kant ignore, at their peril, the vast mass of European philosophical literature dealt with, in one way and another, in Kant's writings and, further, that any attempt to dress him up as a type of watered down empiricist is both scandalous and libellous. If Professor Martin overstates his case, although in the main he produces the requisite quotations in the defence of his main thesis, his over-statement is a peccadillo compared with the understatement of those interpreters on the other side who ignore the extent to which Kant stressed the importance, i.e. existence, of metaphysical entities.

This is one side of Professor Martin's thesis. On the other side is an attempt to evaluate Kant's views about Space and Time and Mathematics in the light of developments in the theories of Mathematics and Physics since the eighteenth century. It is generally held, I take it, that on all this Kant's views have a merely historical interest and philosophers are then faced with the difficult and vexed problem about the value of spending time on what are antiquarian studies. To this I can but add the somewhat fatuous comment that, as Professor Martin shows, the history of philosophy is both philosophy and history, simply because it is done by philosophers. But what is there of interest in this part of his exposition? I seriously commend the reader to the chapter on Space and Time, especially because it contains a more detailed account than usual of the state of mathematical studies in the time of Kant. It is timely, e.g. to be reminded of the fact that non-Euclidean geometrics were more than in the air, that Lambert, a friend of Kant, practised one type of it, that Kant himself held that there was no contradiction in the concepts of non-Euclidean postulates, that they were thus *possible*, but that the impossibility lay in their construction. Professor Martin gives an account, all too short, of how and why Kant disagreed with Leibniz in expounding that mathematical propositions were synthetic. And he argues that this synthetic view of the nature of mathematics is an argument for the spontaneity of thinking evinced in modern theories of mathematics and strangely ignored by their protagonists. But the exposition of Kant's own views of geometry and mathematics generally, e.g. what can be meant by constructing "*a priori* in intuition" is not, to the reviewer, enlightening and the puzzle of "constructing a concept" and applying it to sensibles by means of a schema leaves many questions unanswered. Professor Martin, after dealing with Space and Time, goes on to the Antinomies, then to Kant's account of physical nature, and finally to The Modes of Being, in which he deals with the Being of God and of the Thinking subject. Here, as elsewhere, the author uses material drawn from the whole of Kant's writings to support his thesis that Kant uses metaphysics, that is, the existence of God and the Self as Intelligible, to support his philosophy that science is an ideal account of a world which "appears" but is otherwise grounded. The evidence is impressive and cannot seriously be challenged except by those who substitute disagreement with the Kantian philosophy for interpretation.

In summing up the value of the book for professional teachers of philosophy I would stress first, its value as a source book for the continental predecessors of Kant, next as a source book for the German scholars of Kant and, too, the stress laid on the view that Kant's work "is a continuous discussion with Leibniz." On the other hand I think it likely that there will be complaints that the author has not the intellectual bite and sharpness of a philosopher trained in Great Britain and that the array of scholarship is too vast to be well-founded. Superficially the book is impressive, but 200 pages is a modest ration for the meal that is presented. J. N. WRIGHT.

PHILOSOPHY

Nature and Judgment. By JUSTUS BUCHLER. (Columbia University Press. 1955. Pp. 210. 30s.)

It will be best to say something about the nature of Mr. Buchler's work before considering his theses; for there are many readers who would conclude from a summary of what is said that here is yet one more philosophical enterprise which is doomed from the start. The language looks suspiciously grandiose ("man's status and nature," "existential continuities," "human prospectives") and the things that are said (e.g. that action is judgment, and art interrogation) might seem to have that spurious profundity which comes simply from a shift in the meaning of words. What is remarkable about Mr. Buchler's work is that it is open to no general criticism of this kind. He quite deliberately builds up a structure of concepts related to but not identical with those in the language as it is, and avoids attributing to judgment, for example, in the ordinary sense the conclusions which follow only in his special construction.

To explain the purpose of the early part of the book, which consists in the elaboration of new concepts, one might quote a remark of the author's to the effect that the value of a term may "lie in an exhibitive rather than in an assertive function." One might also compare its appeal with that of the first chapter of Bruno Snell's *The Discovery of the Mind*, in which that author analyses the concept of *sight* as it appears in Homeric literature. Part of Mr. Buchler's work consists in an invention which, like this historical description, provides the reader with a new set of conceptual forms. The value of such work depends, obviously, on the light which it sheds, on how far it does show new relations and help to solve old problems. In his final chapter Mr. Buchler applies his conceptual apparatus in an attempt to give a "general theory of meaning." This is to cover not only the meaning of words but also that meaning which can be attributed to works of art, and the sense of "meaning" in which it can be said that fine weather means one thing to the farmer and another to the man who is on holiday. It is not possible to explain Mr. Buchler's account of *meaning* without elaborating his concepts of *proception* and *judgment*, but some idea of it may be given by the following remark. "The weather will have or acquire meaning for the farmer only in so far as he is the author of a judgment into which it somehow enters—only in so far as he makes, does, or asserts something relating to it" (p. 162). As elaborated, this account is of considerable interest and it illuminates corners usually ignored by those preoccupied by linguistic meaning. But it is possible nevertheless to have doubts about the usefulness of a *general* theory of meaning such as Mr. Buchler pursues; that is, an account which shall cover the whole range of cases in which the word "meaning" is used. It is of course interesting to trace analogies —to show that the man who says "it *means* a great deal to me that . . ." and "that *means* war" is not simply using a quite different word from the man who says " 'encore' *means* something different in French and English," but a general account of "what meaning is" is likely either to play Procrustes to some kinds of meaning, or else to become objectionably indefinite. Mr. Buchler's "general theory of meaning" does not seem to be of much use to him when he tries to tackle the problem of what it is for language to be meaningless. The criticisms which he brings against other philosophers, against for instance the logical positivist and the man who indentifies meaning with reference, are valid but by now fairly generally accepted.

It should, however, be made quite clear that this is a good book. Perhaps it cannot be fully appreciated by readers more or less ignorant of the tradition of American philosophy within which Mr. Buchler writes, but even to them it

will bear an unmistakable mark of quality and can hardly fail to reveal its peculiar charm.

PHILIPPA FOOT.

A Plea for Man. By MARIO M. ROSSI. (Edinburgh University Press. 1956. Pp. viii and 168. Price 9s. 6d.)

"This essay," writes the author at the beginning of his bibliographical note, "might easily appear to be a hasty exposition of more or less brilliant, irresponsible paradoxes." Delete the reference to brilliance, and that is certainly the impression which reading it leaves. *A Plea for Man* is a short book, but even so it is difficult to say what it is about. Much of it consists in an attack on history and historians, who are accused of making exaggerated claims for their studies. Like Marx and Mussolini, it appears, they, or some of them, "maintain that history is basic reality and ultimate truth" (p. 2). They thus foster the doctrine of historicism, a term which, for Mr. Rossi, comprehends three monstrosities: historical relativism, philosophy of history (in the old, speculative sense) and historical positivism, according to which "any historical event is real in and by itself" (p. 3). The ground beneath all three of these can be cut away, the author tells us, by showing that "historical events are abstractions of selected facts" (p. 18). History cannot tell us the truth about the past because it does not tell us everything that happened in the past. "The historian cannot say indeed that my barber was not as real as Mussolini, yet he thinks it legitimate in writing his history to take account of Mussolini's death but not my barber's. This is by itself sufficient to prove that history does not deal with reality as such" (p. 18). (It is curious to notice that this argument was used by Descartes, about whom Mr. Rossi says many unkind things elsewhere in his book.) If the historian replies that he leaves out only what is less important, he is told that "this would mean that there are different degrees of 'historical reality'—and thus 'historical reality' does not mean anything, because any thing is either real or not real" (p. 19). And there is a further difficulty for the historicist. "If history is absolutely real it is infinite, endless" (p. 24). But everybody agrees that there is a point in the past beyond which historians cannot go: history began sometime. But if it began at a definite date we must agree that it will end at a definite date. We ought to go back to "the old, sound idea that history begins at a certain point (the Creation) and ends with the Last Judgment" (p. 25). (Was not this an early philosophy of history?)

For those who like this sort of thing and share the author's antipathy to materialism, atheism and the idea of progress there is much else in the same vein in the book. There are also meditations on the impossibility of a history of philosophy, the shortcomings of existentialism and the nature of biography (of which Mr. Rossi is a practitioner). No individual historians are considered, and there are no references to contemporary British philosophers. The book is perhaps not wholly untypical of a certain sort of contemporary continental philosophizing. Despite the cultural links between Scotland and the Continent, it is hard to see why the Edinburgh University Press thought it worth publishing.

W. H. WALSH.

The Classics and Renaissance Thought. By PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER. (Harvard University Press, London: Cumberlege, 1955. Pp. 106. Price 20s.)

The Renaissance Philosophy of Man. Edited by E. CASSIRER, P. O. KRISTELLER, J. H. RANDALL, JR. (Phoenix Books, The University of Chicago Press, Fourth Impression, 1956. Pp. vi + 405.)

Mr. Kristeller is a scholar well known for his detailed studies in the philosophy of the Italian Renaissance, particularly that of Marsilio Ficino. In the first of these books, containing the Martin Classical Lectures, Vol XV, he gives a comprehensive and graphic account of what are for him the four major currents or traditions that came to make up the philosophical thought of the Renaissance. These are the Humanist movement, the Aristotelian tradition, Platonism, and the interplay of paganism with Christianity. Humanism is to be regarded as the most important of these movements, particularly in relation to philosophical thought. As Mr. Kristeller explains, humanism was a broad cultural and literary movement which, though not philosophical in substance, had important philosophical implications and consequences (p. 22). Throughout, the author is in search of the theoretical assumptions underlying the intellectual tendencies of the Renaissance and of the new philosophical problems that grew out of it. This search, however, never carries him farther than the various stereotyped notions of, e.g., Platonic love, number, and soul, and no attempt is made to bring into the open and analyse the host of puzzles and logical issues embedded in the thought content of the period. It is this that might interest the philosopher, and, in fact, a large field of inquiry in this direction remains as yet largely unexploited, though E. Garin (e.g. in his book *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, 1954), following in the footsteps of Gentile, has done something to promote this kind of study.

The second book, on the Renaissance philosophy of man (first published in 1948; reviewed in *Philosophy*, January 1950, pp. 88–9), contains an Introduction very much along the lines of the first book and selections in translation of texts illustrating three of the main trends of early Renaissance thought. Humanism is represented by Petrarch and Valla, Platonism by Ficino and Pico, Aristotelianism by Pomponazzi. In addition there is Vives' *Fabula de homine*. Though it is judicious on the part of the editors to have included Vives in their selection, it is a pity that they did not choose a more representative work by the Spanish humanist. Vives' treatise on historiography, for instance, could serve to illustrate an aspect of humanism at least as important as any other.

There are full bibliographies and good indexes in both books.

W. VON LEYDEN.

Language and Informal Logic. By ROBERT T. HARRIS and JAMES L. JARRETT. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co. 1956).

To become self-conscious about our speech habits is not in itself sufficient to improve them. We must also be able to tell which of them need improvement. Inevitably then, a book which aims to assist us in this sort of improvement will have to allow room for theoretical as well as practical considerations. It might, indeed, be said that in this particular case of improving an ability, a better understanding of theory is more closely related to better practice than with any other ability. Understanding, for example, the theorist's account of the distinction between literal and metaphorical language carries with it a keener tongue for effective metaphor. With this in mind, the authors have

tried, it would seem, to balance the claims of theory and practice by adding to each chapter an extensive set of problems for discussion, and exercises. The balance, however, tips in favour of practice. We are told, in fact, that the as yet unwritten answers to these problems constitute the most important part of the book.

On the theoretical side, the quality of the text is uneven. The first three chapters (Introduction, Signs, Language and Linguistic Symbols) take extraordinarily little advantage of the opportunity offered by their allotted topics for a thoroughly stimulating and thought-provoking preliminary discussion. Instead, we are given a text heavily overweighted with lengthy quotations from other works and blandly oblivious to the admirable dictum in the Preface: "Readers do not deserve to be 'talked down' to." The following five chapters (Words and Grammar, Meaning and Failures of Meaning, Definition, The Uses of Language, Metaphorical Language) are, in many places, both more illuminating and more interesting. The stress laid on the fact that the informative use of language is in no sense its "real" function, and the clear and concise discussion of analogy, are cases in point. Even so, some slight hint, at least, might have been expected of the existence, if not of the content of the recent literature available on these subjects in this country. Apart from Bertrand Russell, from whom quotations are fairly frequent, the name "Wittgenstein" appears once, after a quotation appended to a chapter heading, and the name "J. L. Austin" is also to be found after a quotation occurring in an exercise. The remaining three chapters (The Language of Concerted Action, Propaganda, Communication for Individual and Society) although not entirely free from the same faults as the first three, have at least this merit, that they, more successfully perhaps than the rest of the book, relate the theoretical points to the practical issues. The description and analysis of Propaganda, for example, although superficial (it is based on a U.S. Government pamphlet: "Armed Forces Talk No. 424"), makes it clear how the elements involved contribute towards its greater or lesser practical effect.

From the point of view of practice in clear speech, the problems and exercises on each chapter's discussion are, for the most part, likely to be of some use in helping the student to attain the aim of the book. Unlike their counterparts in some books of this kind, they are so constructed that the text should be of genuine assistance in their solution.

This is, on the whole, a fairly useful addition to the *Clear Thinking, Thinking to Some Purpose, How to Think Straight* shelf.

G. B. KEENE.

History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages. By ETIENNE GILSON. (Sheed and Ward, London, 1955. 42s. net.)

"Life is short and the history of philosophy is growing longer every year," writes Professor Gilson. In 1930, Professor Gilson published in the Collection Payot, a *History of Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. It covered the period from Scotus Erigena to William of Ockham and comprised 313 small pages. The present work covers a longer period, for it begins with the Greek Apologists and includes Nicholas of Cusa, but the greater part of it is still concerned with the philosophy of the Middle Ages. How much fresh material has been discovered and collated during the last twenty-five years may be judged by the size of the present volume which comprises 804 much larger pages, and includes 250 pages of closely printed notes. Not a writer of any importance has been overlooked; not a thinker who contributed in any way to the development of medieval philosophy has been forgotten. It is a stupendous work for which those who

are interested in the way in which previous generations used to think and talk and argue about the nature of things and the nature of God, will be for ever grateful.

"The most important event which ever happened in the history of Christian doctrines," says Harnack, "took place at the beginning of the second century on the day when Christian Apologists laid down the equation: 'The logos is Jesus Christ.' With it, according to Harnack, began the invasion of the teaching of Christ by the philosophy of the Greeks. Hence the need to begin the study of Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages by considering first precisely what the Christian Apologists and the Greek and Latin Fathers did. Their belief was based on the simple teachings, the parables, and the personality of Christ as revealed by His words and actions. What they did was to introduce the terminology and concepts of Greek philosophers, notably—but by no means exclusively—those of Plato and Plotinus, in order to render more intelligible the teaching of Christ, that thus they might pass from faith to understanding. There are affinities between the teaching of Plato and those of Christ; such as "the doctrine of a maker of the universe; of a provident God; of the existence of an intelligible and divine world of which the sensible world is only an image; of the spirituality of the soul and its superiority over the body; of the illumination of the soul by God; of its enslavement to the body and of the necessity for it to liberate itself; last, not the least, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of a life beyond the grave where it will receive the reward or punishment for its acts" (p. 93). With the Greeks the central notion is that of man as the image of God, an image which, however imperfect, can yet be "divinized." With Augustine the contrast is between nature and grace, but the notion of image still plays a part "analogous to that performed by the notion of grace in Latin theologies."

The Fathers also "discovered in Plato and in some neo-Platonists a more or less vague presentiment of the Christian Trinity." But, although this doctrine is basic in Christian theology and was regarded alike by Augustine, Anselm, Abelard, Richard of St. Victor, Nicholas of Cusa, and others who followed the Platonic tradition as susceptible of philosophic interpretation, and by some even of philosophic proof, Professor Gilson says next to nothing about this development in Christian thought. The reason for this may well be that in Thomas Aquinas we meet for the first time "a theologian so careful to distinguish between faith and reason that the philosophical elements included in his theology can be extracted from it and considered apart without undergoing any modification in nature or content" (p. 355); and that amongst these "philosophical elements" the Trinity is not included, since in Aristotle there is no trace of any such doctrine.

For Thomas Aquinas, says Gilson, "the scientific knowledge of nature was in Aristotle, whose doctrine he learned, commented upon and accepted, on the whole, in logic, physics, astronomy, biology, psychology, metaphysics and ethics." Yet, "Thomism was not the upshot of a better understanding of Aristotle. It did not come out of Aristotle by way of evolution, but of revolution. Thomas uses the language of Aristotle everywhere to make the Philosopher say there is only one God, the pure Act of Being, Creator of the world, infinite and omnipotent, a providence for all that which is, intimately present to every one of his creatures, especially to men, every one of whom is endowed with a personally immortal soul naturally able to survive the death of its body. The best way to make Aristotle say so many things he never said was not to show that, had he understood himself better than he did, he could have said them," . . . but to "metamorphose the doctrine of Aristotle" by ascribing "a new meaning to the principles of Aristotle" (p. 365).

The only school whose history came to a close at about the same time as the century which witnessed this obtrusion of a re-interpreted Aristotle into Christian philosophy, was that of Bonaventure, Aquinas' contemporary and friend, who repudiated Aristotle and based his belief in God on a form of experience, admitted neither by Aristotle nor by Aquinas. Aristotle's principles survived, but only to be re-interpreted again and again, until the story culminates in Ockham who "denies that theology is a science, because no science can rest upon faith." "No wonder then," adds Gilson, "that he does not worry very much about what natural reason can, or cannot, prove in matters of faith. . . Ockham is perfectly safe in what he believes only he does not *know* what he believes, nor does he need to know it" (p. 498).

LESLIE J. WALKER, S.J.

The Warfare of Democratic Ideas. By FRANCIS M. MYERS. (Antioch Press, Ohio. 1956. Pp. 248. $3.50.)

This book is concerned with the philosophical foundations of democracy. The author, who, we learn, is now Professor at the University of Denver, writes from an Instrumentalist standpoint, and holds that whereas other philosophies cannot furnish the required foundations, Instrumentalism can. The other philosophies examined are "Traditional Empiricism"—which includes the views of such moral philosophers as Perry as well as certain Positivists,—Neo-Thomism, and the "Protestant Absolutisms" of Royce and Hocking.

Many empiricists—as Professor Myers sees it—would like to make Empiricism a truly democratic philosophy; but they are blocked by the impassable barrier which for them, divides description from evaluation. Hence Empiricism is driven into ethical relativism. The inward weakness of the modern liberal faith is the fear that its values have no more objective basis than those of its opponents. Hence we are thrown back on "might" as the ultimate arbiter of differences—more strictly, I take it, on non-rational procedures.

Neo-Thomism and Absolute Idealism are perhaps rather duty-work for Professor Myers. They are duly expounded and refuted; but the treatment suggests rather strongly the doctoral thesis from which we are told that the book derives. The former, he holds, is essentially authoritarian, and appeals to unverifiable convictions. The democracy Maritain defends is not the same as the democracy the rest of us believe in; for the Church—whose pronouncements on liberty and equality are quoted—is always allowed the last word. As to the latter, the hitching of democratic politics to the Absolute, in Professor Myers's view, is more or less arbitrary or artificial.

Empiricism has no objective values; transcendalism has the wrong ones; it remains for Instrumentalism to meet the dilemma. Professor Myers gives a good condensed exposition of Dewey's logic and epistemology: though it is hard not to feel, here as elsewhere in instrumentalist writing, a certain want of edge, of definiteness—especially in its criticism of rival views. On these foundations we are to base an Ethic that shall be at once objective and non-transcendental. For an instrumentalist all judgments—not only those usually called "moral judgments"—are in some sense practical; they involve the choice of a course of action in a problematic situation. These choices are guided by valuations: values are given in experience, no less than other qualities—things are experienced as say, lovable, no less than as green—but these in turn are tested and modified in use. In acting and choosing (in science too) one must have ends-in-view; but these themselves are corrected in the process.

We turn finally to social theory itself. All men, willy-nilly, are involved in practical activity—in the pursuit of the good life. But the method of experiment and controlled inquiry—the method of science—has proved the best practical instrument that men have evolved. It belongs to social life too. Professor Myers will not entrust its direction to experts—not for the obvious reason that they may abuse their power, but because they are limited in perspective. "Genuinely scientific experiment needs all the points of view it can get" (p. 224). A democracy, then, is to be an experimental community in which everyone participates. Despite his criticisms of Maritain, Professor Myers himself shows some inclination to stretch the term, if not to redefine it; for he wants it to mean, not primarily the political arrangements that it normally is used to mean, but a way of life. In "group activity" throughout society each person will take part in "the examination, criticism and formulation of common purposes and ends" (p. 225). In a further formula, whose cash-value is not wholly clear to me, the aim of democracy is said to be the creation of conditions in which "each man may control his own life to the extent of his capacities" (p. 219).

Professor Myers presents persuasively ideas to which he is clearly earnestly committed. In general Instrumentalism deserves to be more studied in this country—if only in view of the striking resemblance of some of Dewey's central ideas to those of Wittgenstein. DAVID POLE

Books also received:

RUPERT CRAWSHAY-WILLIAMS. *Methods and Criteria of Reasoning: An Inquiry into the Structure of Controversy*. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1957. Pp. (viii) & 296. 32s.

SISIRKUMAR MITRA. *Sri Aurobindo and the New World*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. 1957. Pp. 77. Rs. 1.4.

DAWSON JACKSON. *A Primer of Necessary Belief*. Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1957. Pp. 95 14s.

RONALD FLETCHER. *Instinct in Man in the Light of Recent Work in Comparative Psychology*. George Allen & Unwin. 1957. Pp. 348. 40s.

RAY LEPLEY (Ed.). *The Language of Value*. Columbia University Press. (London: Oxford University Press.) 1957. Pp. (viii) & 428. 52s.

ERNST CASSIRER. *Determinism and Indeterminism in Modern Physics: Historical and Systematic Studies of the Problem of Causality*. Yale University Press. (London: Oxford University Press.) 1957 Pp. (xxiv) & 227. 40s.

SÖREN HALLDEN. *On the Logic of "Better."* CWK Gleerup, Lund. Ejnar Munksgaard, Copenhagen. 1957. Pp. 111. No price given.

J. HEYWOOD THOMAS. *Subjectivity and Paradox: A Study of Kierkegaard*. Basil Blackwell. 1957. Pp. 174. 18s.

EVERETT W. KNIGHT. *Literature Considered as Philosophy: The French Example*. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1957. Pp. (xvi) & 240. 25s.

H. G. WOOD. *Thought, Life and Time as Reflected in Science and Poetry*. Cambridge University Press. 1957. Pp. 57. 4s. 6d.

FAITH BALDWIN. *Face Toward the Spring*. Peter Davies. 1957. Pp. (xi) & 211. 15s.

W. D. Ross (Ed.). *Aristotelis Politica*. Oxford University Press. 1957. Pp. (x) & 282. 25s.

RICHARD PANKHURST. *The Saint Simonians Mill and Carlyle*. Sidgwick & Jackson. 1957. Pp. (x) & 154. 21s.

FRIEDRICH MEINECKE. (Trans. by Douglas Scott, Introduction by Dr. W. Stark.) *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État and its Place in Modern History*. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1957. Pp. (xlvi) & 438. 50s.

GEOFFREY WAGNER. *Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy*. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1957. Pp. (xvi) & 363. 35s.

C. A. CAMPBELL. *On Selfhood and Godhood*. The Gifford Lectures delivered at the University of St. Andrews, 1953–54 and 1954–55 revised and expanded. George Allen & Unwin. 1957. Pp. (xxxvi) & 436. 35s.

DURAND ECHEVERRIA. *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815*. Princeton University Press. (London: Oxford University Press.) 1957. Pp. (xvii) & 300. 40s.

G. SPENCER BROWN. *Probability and Scientific Inference*. Longmans, Green & Co. 1957. Pp. (ix) & 154. 15s.

WILLIAM L. FISCHER. *Critical Notes on Evolution*. William L. Fischer, München. 1957. Pp. 111. No price given.

SRI AUROBINDO. *More Poems*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. 1957. Pp. 91. Rs. 2.8.

SAMIR KANTA GUPTA (Trans.). *Songs from Chandidasa*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Pondicherry. 1957. Pp. 45. Rs. 1.50.

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